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OUR correspondence columns again bear witness to the wide-spread fear that Mr. Snowden's land values proposal threatens the English country-side with an even more rapid spoliation. The tax on playing fields, the Solicitor-General argues, will be a bagatelle, provided their owners—whether schools or colleges or private individuals—put them within the provisions of town-planning schemes. But can we be sure of that? And even if we were not unhappy about it with a tax of 1d. in the £1, how if this became (as it presently may) 3d. or 6d.? On the other, and even more important, point at issue—the likelihood of the tax leading to a further orgy of ribbon development and destruction of amenities—Sir Stafford Cripps was still less reassuring. He said that here there was a misunderstanding which would be cleared up when the Bill was before the Committee. We hope, indeed, that it will, but we are curious to know how.

* * *

The Town and Country Planning Bill does give large powers to the local authorities and the Minister of Health to check "ribboning" and protect decency and beauty. But it wants a lot of stiffening up if it is to be effective. Even were this Bill passed to-morrow, we should obviously have a long time to wait before the country was adequately covered by planning schemes. And in the interval immense damage can be done by the throwing of fields and parkland and woodland into the maw of the speculative builder. One of Mr. Snowden's avowed objects is to promote sales of land. It is a good object if the purposes of the buyer are good. But the mischief is that we have no guarantee that they will be, no authority properly equipped to insist that they shall be. What we have got is an incitement to the selling of land for bad uses—and evidence that the evil has already begun. Speculative builders do not let the grass grow under their feet—or anywhere else—if they can help it.

* * *

One of the great advantages claimed for this tax is that it naturally tends to bind the Labour and Liberal Parties more closely together. A more permanent form of cement is being provided by Lord Hailsham and his colleagues in the Lords who have chewed up the Land Utilisation Bill—one of the Government's best efforts—until little or nothing remains. The experimental farms have gone, the development of small holdings has been restricted, and an attempt has even been made to limit the total expenditure. This is a piece of sublime impertinence: Lord Hailsham actually invited the Government to waive the privilege of the Commons in matters of finance as a price of securing the passage of the miserable remnants of their Bill. Even this has not prevented the egregious Lord Banbury from moving his inevitable motion of total rejection. A battle royal with

the House of Lords is now staged—if the Tory Party is foolish enough to make so splendid a gift to the Government.

* * *

Was the Spanish revolution too good to be true? The "days of April," when the Republic was born in an almost miraculous calm, have been followed by the "days of May"—an outburst of mob fury and arson, which, even if it proves to be short-lived, is no good augury for the future. In our last issue we predicted that trouble, if it came, would come from the Left—and it has, though it is true that Monarchists were the spark that ignited the gunpowder. It might have been supposed that the solemn warning of Don Alfonso to his friends not to embarrass the Republic would have met with more respect. But perhaps those who shouted "Viva el Rey!" and stacked their offices with firearms, were thinking not of Alfonso, but of some monarch of their own imagination. Or possibly the warning was a bogus one, a mere blind, though we are loth to believe in such villainy. In any case, these hotheads have provoked disastrous reprisals from their opposite numbers on the Left. The incendiarism and rioting which began in Madrid has spread across southern Spain. Martial law is in force, as we write, in a dozen or more of the big cities, and the civil guards have their work cut out to protect life and property.

* * *

It is tempting, in the circumstances, to compare the Republican revolution to the bourgeois revolutions in Europe in 1848, or the Kerensky revolution in Russia in 1917. But, difficult though his task may be, Señor Zamora is not facing the same difficulties as Kerensky faced. The rioters, no doubt, include a number of Communists and other malcontents of the syndicalist or anarchist school that has had a long history in Spain. But these elements have neither the leaders nor the organisation nor the general support, which made the Bolshevik movement so formidable in Russia. The mass of the Spanish people—workers as well as bourgeois—are for the Republic. They are not for a dictatorship of the proletariat, and there is no evidence that they even approve of the burning of churches and convents. The crowds in many places seem to have played the role of passive spectators. It may be that the traditional Spanish apathy will prove one of the great difficulties of the new regime. Whether the present outrages will result in any reaction towards the Right remains to be seen. The Government's policy at the moment appears to be to act with impartial rigour in restoring order, and at the same time to turn their special attention to the suspects of the *ancien régime*, to whom, as many think, they have hitherto allowed overmuch rope. Prominent Monarchists have already been arrested, including the ducal proprietor of the newspaper *A.B.C.*, and General Berenguer, who was recently acquitted, much to the popular indignation, by a military tribunal. Proceedings are also threatened against the ex-King.

* * *

M. Doumer has been elected President of the French Republic, and M. Briand and his backers are sadly disappointed. Though there were several other candidates, the issue lay between these two, the one the favourite of the Right, the other of the Left. It would be a waste of ink to discuss the campaign with all its excitement, or to speculate whether M. Briand might not have been successful had he pursued different tactics. His defeat, regrettable as it may seem, is not going to bring the world down about our ears. M. Doumer stands somewhere about the Right centre. He has had a fairly distinguished career; he is old, and only moderately versed in foreign affairs. He is not, we believe, a man of blood. The influence that he may be expected to exercise on French policy must be small. M. Briand's would doubtless have been greater; but it would not have been so epoch-making as some people appear to think. Though the power of the French President is not so strictly limited as that of the King of England, it has well recognised bounds. The failure of M. Briand is not, then, a defeat for the cause of European peace. It will have little or no effect on the foreign policy of France, for that is not made or unmade at the Elysée.

* * *

The debate on India in the House of Commons last Wednesday offered us little to bite on. Everybody deplored the boycott. The Secretary of State suggested that things were not so bad as they were made out; his opponents argued that they were worse. No one had a remedy for Lancashire's trouble and, indeed, there can be no effective remedy until a real settlement with India has been reached. But Mr. Churchill was as indefatigable as usual in his efforts to prevent that settlement. The Round Table Conference is no good—nothing, apparently, is any good except the big stick. Mr. Gandhi must be put down. The Indian millowners must be put down, for Mr. Churchill has now discovered that they are Gradgrinds who sweat their poor operatives. The Hindu "hegemonists" also must be put down, for Mr. Churchill's heart is now bleeding for the Moslems. What ought we to do? he asked. And the answer was—"our duty." We must face the situation "resolutely, patiently and calmly." And then what? Arrest, imprison, shoot? There is obviously no salvation that way. But those of us who are not of the Churchillian way of thinking are anxious to know that the Government are not going to drift. We should like news of some definite steps towards the goal.

* * *

The Prime Minister has now asked representatives of the three railway Trade Unions to meet him in order to discuss the claim that transport shall be socialised and run as a public service. This demand, it will be remembered, was made by the Trade Union representatives on the National Railway Wages Board, when they agreed to accept adverse changes in wages and conditions a month or two ago. The question of railway socialisation has since then been brought appreciably nearer by the publication of the Weir Report, which proposes a great scheme for railway electrification, involving capital that the public would certainly not provide without some form of Government guarantee. But the Government can hardly either provide or guarantee the money without assuming some sort of control. Closely connected with the question is, of

course, that of co-ordination with road services and ports, so as to provide a unified transport service, eliminating wasteful competition and increasing public facilities. It is a good thing that Mr. Morrison likes work; when he has finished with his London Transport Bill, he may find himself very fully occupied with preparing a yet more ambitious measure.

* * *

Mr. Johnston announced in a speech last week-end that the Government proposed to take in hand the reorganisation of the steel trade as a public corporation; and it has since been announced that Mr. Graham will make a full statement on the Board of Trade vote, covering plans for the cotton trade as well as for steel. Plans for a voluntary consolidation of the steel trade into a series of regional combines have, of course, been under consideration for some time past. But there have been hitches—too many of them—and Mr. Johnston's announcement presumably means that some form of compulsion is to be applied. How much more it means we have still to learn; for the phrase "public corporation" might imply a good many different things. We hope the intention is to bring the entire production of raw steel under co-ordinated public control, to write off drastically past capital losses, and to provide new capital for re-equipment directly under the auspices of the State. Our steel industry cannot hope to regain its old position in world markets until it is both unified and largely re-equipped; and public money cannot be devoted to this purpose without firm guarantees that it will be used, not to replace past losses, but to develop the industry. Much the same considerations apply to cotton, which has also failed to carry through reorganisation on a voluntary basis. In both cases, we hope the Government have at length made up their mind to intervene courageously with a policy involving not only State help, but also State control.

* * *

The campaign for lower wages has spread this week to the dockers; and the port employers have put in a series of drastic demands for the revision of the existing national agreement. Mr. Bevin, on behalf of the Transport Union, has declared roundly that the demands offer no basis for negotiation, and the dockers are expected to endorse his view. If the employers then persist, a big struggle may easily follow—a struggle which may not be confined to the transport industry. The engineers, shipbuilders, builders and chemical workers are all in much the same position, having rejected demands made by the respective groups of employers; and there is, of course, serious prospect of trouble in the coal mines as soon as the Eight Hours Act expires. In fact, the long-postponed struggle over wage-rates seems to be coming at length to a head.

* * *

There is no sign of the Trade Unions having been convinced by the economists of the wages-must-come-down school. Clearly, they mean to put up a fight. And it is better that they should be ready to resist, even though the fight itself would be a disaster. For we are wholly unconvinced that wage-reductions are the right, or a possible, way of curing unemployment. A general fall of wages in this country is far more likely to intensify the movement to lower wages in America and on the Continent, and to leave our workers worse, and our employers no better, off than before. The world is suffering not from too high a standard of life, but from one too low to absorb the goods it is readily able to produce. It takes a very orthodox economist to hold that lower wages are a remedy for inadequate purchasing power.

* * *

No one supposes that the Prince of Wales is a great economist; but he made, on the whole, a very sensible speech on Tuesday to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. He said, indeed, nothing that has not been said a hundred times before; but let us hope he said some of it so as to be more tolerantly listened to than most critics of Lancashire's mental outlook. His insistence on closer trade organisation, and on co-operative in place of competitive selling in foreign markets like those of South America only reinforces what has been urged very strongly by the D'Abernon Mission and by trade missions for almost every market in which we are concerned. It is, for example, the burden of the report of the recent mission to China. In times of depression consumers, especially in the poorer countries, are led to ask for cheaper products even at a sacrifice of quality, and our industries are in many cases not efficient at making or selling the cheaper types of goods. No one in his senses will want us to ape generally American methods of mass-production, which would be largely unsuitable to our home markets, and would lose us the benefit of our special manufacturing skill. But we can at any rate go some way towards meeting the demand for cheaper goods, without sacrificing the quality market, if we will but make our industrial methods more adaptable to changing needs. And we shall have to do this unless we are prepared to lose a good deal more of our export trade.

* * *

The criminal statistics for 1929 have just been published. A number of points of interest emerge. Indictable offences increased by 4,112 to 134,581. This compares with an average of 97,924 in the five years preceding the war. Crime, therefore, is still tending to increase. Why this should be is uncertain; the Home Office has no definite theory to offer. Explanations which are popular range over a wide field. They include (1) "the war," with its "relaxation of inhibitions"; (2) the decay of formal religion; (3) increased opportunity; (4) unemployment and industrial depression; (5) the cinema; and (6) Chicago and a Chicago-obsessed press. As between the efficacy, as deterrents, of economic prosperity, a censorship of morals, and the fear of hell, it is difficult to decide; but it is noteworthy, and alarming, that crime becomes increasingly a problem of adolescence or of the comparatively young. In 1907, out of 50,000 persons found guilty, 16,000 were under 21; in 1929, out of 53,000, the number under age was 21,000. There is here a real problem to which far too little consideration is given. We advise the Home Secretary to devote less of his energy to sweepstakes and Sunday observance and rather more to the prevention and effective treatment of juvenile delinquency.

MAX ON THE WAR-PATH

THERE is a difference between the stunts of our two Press Peers. Lord Rothermere's are just sheer, blatant, pernicious nonsense. Lord Beaverbrook's are mainly, but not entirely, nonsense. They are the more pernicious because they can be supported by some half-truths and misunderstood facts. Lord Beaverbrook's latest stunt is a screaming, raging attack on the League of Nations and the organisations which support it. It has at least the merit of making one issue clearer—that Empire Free Trade is incompatible with a sane internationalism. You cannot, as Lord Beaverbrook has apparently realised, believe both in putting a tariff barrier round the Empire and in what the *Daily Express*, with fine contempt, calls "the brotherhood of man." Empire Free Trade would mean war if it could ever be achieved, which, thank God, it cannot be.

One could leave Lord Beaverbrook there and say no more if he confined himself to denouncing all these "well-meaning, muddle-headed" people who are members of the 3,000 branches of the League of Nations Union, who pay nearly £40,000 in subscriptions to the Union, and who believe in peace and internationalism and other discreditable ideas. If that were all, the stunt would not deserve comment. It will probably soon die in any case now that it has been pointed out that a galaxy of admirals, generals, peers, and perhaps even some well-meaning and muddle-headed Empire Free Traders are members of the League of Nations Union. Space will be found for more popular copy. But, short-lived though it may be, this particular stunt does advocate a half-thought-out, cowardly policy which has some appeal for a great many ignorant persons.

In the first place the *Daily Express* declares in a loud headline that the League of Nations Union is a "menace to the State." That is just its ignorance. If only it were true! Of course, the League of Nations Union ought to be a real menace to the State; if the League is to be real it must end the State as we know it, end the armed State, and end State "sovereignty," which means, non-legal language, the right to decide one's own cause and force one's own will on other nations. The notion of ending the State in its historical sense is the very kernel of the League idea; the acceptance of the arbitration of foreigners and the beginning of genuine disarmament—which are the immediate objectives of League policy—can only be achieved if the League is genuinely a menace to the State. If all the members of the League of Nations Union really intend—and we fear that many of them do not—to menace the State in this sense, they splendidly deserve Lord Beaverbrook's obloquy.

Then the *Daily Express* turns its attention to the League itself. The real business of the Council, it declares, is "the prevention of a Customs Union between Austria and Germany." "Mr. Henderson will be allowed to speak . . . and the French delegates will decide . . . Geneva is nothing but an adjunct to the Quai d'Orsay." Is there any truth at all in this? Some truth, of course. Enough to mislead. There is always a danger that French influence will predominate at Geneva, that the League may be used as an instrument of French nationalism, that the attempt to keep Germany disarmed in the midst of an armed Europe will succeed for a long enough period to lead to German rearmament instead of general disarmament. But what is the helpful conclusion of the *Daily Express*? That disarmament is the most urgent of all causes? That we must work, in the absence of any better instrument, to make the League a more real and genuine instrument of international action? No, its conclusion is that Great Britain must "assert her independence," concentrate on sympathetic friendship with America and the Dominions, withdraw from the League and "curb the League of Nations Union by cutting off its funds."

If Lord Beaverbrook's organs were served with a regular supply of reliable foreign news, if one could obtain from them any adequate notion of the European situation, and if this was a sincere conclusion and not a mere splashing in the news columns, it would be worth while fully to expose its folly. We should argue that England can never be independent of Europe, that apart from the League there seems no way of preventing the tendency—strong enough as it is in any case—to drift straight back to the Balance of Power in Europe, and therefore straight to a war which would mean the end of our civilisation. For if Europe goes down we go down with it.

But we doubt whether Lord Beaverbrook would be interested. Serious news and careful comment about foreign affairs do not increase circulation. Nor does a fanatic care how he bedevils public opinion, how he confuses issues and exploits ignorance. The commercial press sees no farther than its profits. Press peers may not want war. But they pursue the policy which leads to it. The very papers—Lord Beaverbrook's amongst them—which were, by their propaganda in 1918-19, largely responsible for preventing Austria and Germany forming a Customs Union and for many of the other iniquities of the Treaty of Versailles are now themselves accusing her—in the terms of the *Daily Express*—of a policy of encirclement similar to Germany's before the war. The stunt press likes "an enemy"—which may be Germany yesterday, France to-day, and Russia to-morrow.

But it may be objected that, however wrong-headed Lord Beaverbrook may show himself in this hunting of villains, he is right in his contention that we are faced with a choice between the League and the Empire. On the contrary, it is precisely there that his cardinal error lies. Internationalism, cries the *Daily Express*, is the gospel of the supporters of the League; "the Empire is anathema." That is rubbish. The Empire—in its full and best sense—is not anathema. The British Commonwealth of Nations is not to be pitted against the League; it can be, and should be, an integral and an immensely valuable part of it. It is a League within the League, inspired by the same ideals of peace and fraternity as the larger body is, or ought to be. Nor need even the Colonies, as distinct from the Dominions, be regarded as a discordant element. It is true that our colonial administration is far from perfect; but it is improving, and in the extension of the mandatory system there lies the hope of the backwood

peoples, which constitute one of the chief problems alike of imperialists and of internationalists. If, then, we think that in order to save the Empire (whatever that may mean) we must oppose internationalism, we are making egregious fools of ourselves. The true interests of this country and of all the British peoples overseas is bound up with Europe and the rest of the world. Isolation, if it were possible, would ultimately destroy the Empire. When Lord Beaverbrook laughs at the League, his laughter is as the crackling of thorns under a pot.

ARTICULATE AFRICA

AFRICA has spoken, and whether she achieves anything on this occasion or not, the moment has been vastly dramatic. Something unexpected, something portentous has arisen, marking the end of darkest Africa and the beginning of a new dispensation. African leaders can now speak for their people: this is the startling fact with which we are confronted to-day, and it is a fact which must influence all our future policies.

All the African witnesses have now appeared before the Joint Committee on East Africa—first Kenya, then Tanganyika, and finally, this week, Uganda. None who heard the evidence of Serwano Kulubya and his colleagues could fail to be impressed; but though these last witnesses were undoubtedly the most able, they also had the advantage of a more sympathetic hearing. Nothing more remarkable has been seen during the long sessions of the Committee than its change of attitude towards the African witnesses. The tolerant indifference which was displayed by a number of members of the Committee towards the witnesses from Kenya has gradually been replaced by an air of expectancy and interest. The Committee has clearly been impressed as much by the manner as by the matter of the evidence. Questions at first thrown out thoughtlessly, casually, as if the questioner expected no intelligent answer, were in the end put with the deference which is reserved for witnesses with expert knowledge.

The Committee itself has not emerged with the same credit; that is the second reflection which is forced on us. Many of the questions put to the native witnesses were frankly silly. The Committee could not be expected to know certain of the more intimate details of African life. Indeed, nothing could have been more graceful than the Chairman's apology for his inability to distinguish between the various titles and terms employed in Bantu languages. How could he be familiar with them? But, on the other hand, there was surely no necessity to question the witnesses on points of fact which could have been ascertained by a few minutes of preliminary study. The subject of land tenure in Buganda, for example, is amply documented, and Serwano Kulubya was justified in his reproof that "the position of land is clearly laid down in Section 15 of the Uganda Agreement of 1900: that is all that I can say on the subject." Others of the witnesses—not all of them, admittedly—have proved their familiarity with the official literature on East African problems, but the witnesses from Uganda have shown a grasp of the subject which is astonishing in its detail. They have analysed the various reports and despatches, and proved themselves to be competent to match citation by citation, to offer reference for reference, and to bandy figures with the skill of expert parliamentarians.

The third point of significance is the convergence of all the witnesses, black and white, on Kenya. Kenya is the storm centre, and native Africans have shown themselves as shy as the white communities outside Kenya—including members of the Chamber of Commerce—of linking themslves more closely with Kenya. Federation means federation with Kenya and, rightly or wrongly, they have formed the impression that such a mating would imply the subordination of their own interests. "Paramountcy," said Kulubya, "means nothing to us at present. But it might come to mean a great deal." Closer union with Kenya "would be selling our birthright for a mess of pottage, which would come to us with a bad taste." They would fear for their national future, and do not wish to be at the mercy of people who might raise the cry of paramountcy to the detriment of their interests. "Our only desire is to be left alone," he affirmed. "We ask for justice and fair play, and want to go on as we are." They look askance even at economic federation, because it may be the first step towards political federation.

The Baganda and some of their neighbours are, of course, in a position of peculiar strength, as they are safeguarded by the Uganda Agreement of 1900, which is the charter of their liberties. The gravamen of their complaint is that nothing was said of this Agreement in the White Paper and in recent official reports which have been published. Consequently they fear that their rights under the Agreement might be jeopardised by closer union and will have none of it. Unpublished correspondence does not satisfy them, and when we remember the changing policies of British Governments and our failure to respect pledges given to the Masai and Kikuyu—to mention no others—Kulubya was, perhaps, not too severe when he replied to an assurance that the independence of the Baganda would be respected: "Your promises, my lord, are likely to be forgotten." Were the Agreement included, however, in any public document constituting such a union, they would be content to come into it.

The African evidence did show one natural defect. Admirable and competent witnesses as these Africans have proved themselves to be, they are still parochial in outlook; even the best of them lack the experience and education to take a view wider than their own special interests. A large part of Uganda was unrepresented, and only a few of the tribes are protected by treaty rights. Yet the representatives of these tribes, giving evidence before the Committee, are prepared to accept closer union if their especial rights are safeguarded. What of the others, the bulk of Uganda's population, who have no such safeguards? Do the witnesses speak for them? Breadth of view, however, will come, and increasing experience will eliminate the parochialism which is as yet inevitable.

What is surprising, indeed, is not so much that their outlook is parochial, but that it is not more so; not their ignorance, but their astonishing knowledge. Speaking of Swahili as an official language, the Uganda witnesses all disapproved of it. Swahili to them is a

foreign language, spoken on the coast. "The Swahili are all right, but who are they?"—implying that they are a heterogeneous amalgam of races, as indeed they are, without a distinctive culture of their own. On this subject of culture, too, they show a sanity which some of our leaders might emulate. Questioned as to whether the elective principle might not be introduced into their *lukiko* or council, Kulubya replied by quoting from correspondence which had passed between the Kabaka, as the king of the Baganda is called, and the Governor on the subject. The Kabaka had rejected the suggestion on the grounds that the elective principle was foreign to their culture and would inevitably lead to its disintegration: it was not wanted and would not work—and they preferred their own culture. *O si sic omnes!* Too much attention has been paid to the ballot-box type of constitution, which is not necessarily more democratic or more efficient than the existing constitutions of Africa; but it is a novelty for the African to have the discrimination to reject what is unwisely offered him by his teachers.

A similar discretion was observed by Chief Zirabamulaze, who represents the interests of the Basoga. The Basoga, he submitted, were opposed to allocating five acres of freehold to each man, as is now being done in certain parts of Uganda. This is not in accordance with their custom, he contended, and the economic results would not be nearly as satisfactory as a continuance of the communal tenure to which they were accustomed. This interest in their own cultures is one of the most hopeful signs of the awakening of Africa. The objection of the Basoga is, moreover, of interest in that it indicates that the representatives of Uganda are not unanimous on all points. Both in form and matter there are divergencies, and if this indicates a form of parochialism, it also proves conclusively that they have given the problems individual attention and that they do carry the mandates of their people and not, as has been suggested, the interested opinions of local officials. It is important that this should be appreciated.

And, finally, the witnesses have not hesitated to admit their ignorance; they have not fallen into the snare of expressing opinions outside their own experience. "I cannot express an opinion," said one in reply to a question of wider economics, "on anything of which I have no knowledge." Or again: "Our fear is of the unknown. I can express no opinion unless everything is put openly on the table." A more subtle evasion shows them quite up to the standard of parliamentary dialectics: "That is a question which is entirely a matter for the Kabaka, and I can make no statement." The poise and self-possession of the witnesses have been remarkable, and they have well merited the praise of the Chairman, who observed that their objections to closer union were so clearly argued that he could find no questions to ask them on that point. The prolonged series of inquiries into the question of East Africa may not result in any very concrete constitutional change, but it will at least have done something to educate this country about the black people whom we have so far ruled with so little understanding.

THE BUTT-GATHERER

HE was a smallish man, wearing a coat that had obviously been given to him many years ago by a broad-shouldered six-footer. He shuffled along the Brighton front in shoes that were so widely gashed that his grey socks were visible above the toes. He was, I should say, in the late sixties—an elderly man with a parrot nose and a grey moustache—and walked with his eyes on the ground like Mammon. He peered about him like a bird in search of food, and at every few steps he bent down quickly, picked up a cigarette-butt from the pavement, and put it into his pocket. His course was zigzag, for one cigarette-butt would be lying near the railings and the next under a deck-chair. He was unconscious of everything on earth except the cigarette-butts. He was indifferent to the sun as it shone above a sea that was all glare and no colour. He had no eyes for the young men in bathing costumes who were lazily paddling their canoes over the still water. The stall on the beach at which a man was preparing an array of little dishes of whelks, cockles and mussels had as little charm for him as the large hotels across the road where people were arriving in motor-cars to devour five-course lunches. The black fishing-smacks on the shingle, the white piers projecting light-heartedness into the sea, the passing of the young and idle along the promenade, the peace of the Sunday morning—he gave none of them a glance, but hurried over to a refuse box, lifted all the paper out, and looked carefully to see whether by chance a few stray cigarette-butts might be lying at the bottom. He shook his head disappointedly when he found there were none, and thrust back the paper into the box. Then he put his hand on the railings and peered down at the pavement on the lower promenade in the hope that the largesse of butts might be richer there. Apparently it was not, for he continued to search along the front, zigzagging and diving like a seagull looking for food on a dirty foreshore.

It was a morning, I imagine, on which one was too indolent even to feel a charitable impulse. And by the time the old man had gone out of sight I reproached myself for not having given the old man a cigarette or a packet of cigarettes. Clearly, he was one of the smoking brotherhood—a capnosophist such as the acrimonious non-smoker can never be expected to understand. He had a craving for tobacco—that craving that divides the race of men sharply into two camps. I do not know whether he afterwards used the butts to fill a pipe—a kind of smoking that burns the tongue, but that is better than no smoking at all—or whether he begged enough pence during the week to buy cigarette-papers and roll new cigarettes out of the refuse of the old. He was not smoking as he worked. Like a wise man he was saving the tobacco till he got home when it would last longer than in the strong sea air. Pleasure deferred is pleasure doubled, as everyone knows who has found himself with only one cigarette left in the packet in a lonely place five miles away from a cigarette shop. Shall I smoke it now, or shall I keep it? How often that problem has vexed the human conscience! And only the fool has decided: "Smoke it now." I do not know whether tobacco is worth all the pangs that mortal men have suffered through love of it. I have myself given it up and thought of giving it up more times than I care to remember. But at least there is in the craving for it a conspicuous moral element. It strengthens the will—the will to obtain tobacco—and gives a purpose to life. I have lived pennilessly with a penniless man, both of us smokers, and know what it is to hoard up the cigarette-butts of to-day as material for the cigarettes of to-morrow. A revolting practice in the eyes of the fastidious rich, but starving men cannot afford to be squeamish. A little steeper in

penury, and my friend and I, too, might conceivably have slipped out into the streets after dark and searched the pavements for fag-ends carelessly chucked away by butchers' errand boys more fortunate than ourselves. A weak man in such circumstances might decide to give up smoking altogether, but the resolute man suppresses his qualms as cowardice, sets his jaw, and earns his smokes in the sweat of his brow.

I am sure that, if Wordsworth had been alive and had seen the old butt-gatherer at work on Sunday he would not have let him pass without a reflection on his moral significance. He would also, I am sure, have spoken to him, though, if one may judge from his poems, Wordsworth was one of the worst men at conversational openings who ever lived. "The Leech-Gatherer" is one of the most beautiful poems in English literature, but Wordsworth's own conversation, as recorded in it, is as fatuous as can be imagined.

> At length, himself unsettling, he the pool
> Stirr'd with his staff, and fixedly did look
> Upon the muddy water, which he conn'd
> As if he had been reading in a book:
> And now such freedom as I could I took;
> And, drawing to his side, to him did say:
> "This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

This was probably Wordsworth's stock opening when conversing with old men upon whom he wished to moralise. Had he approached the butt-gatherer on the Brighton front, it is almost certain that he would have addressed the same line to him. I doubt, however, whether his observation would have been received by the butt-gatherer in the same spirit in which the leech-gatherer received it:

> A gentle answer did the old man make,
> In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew.

The butt-gatherer was a rather cross-looking old man and, as soon as he realised that Wordsworth's object was not to supply him with cigarettes but to draw a moral from him, I fear he would have answered him in the language of an irate admiral. Or he might merely have regarded him as a mad non-smoker, and have shuffled away from him as fast as his tattered shoes could carry him. He would have been left in no doubt if he had waited for Wordsworth to continue with the Brighton equivalent of—

> "What kind of work is that which you pursue?
> This is a lonesome place for one like you."

The more I read of Wordsworth the more I regard it as one of the miracles of literature that he ever got to know anybody at all and that he was able to write so gloriously about men and children to whom he talked so ridiculously. For even when the old leech-gatherer had told him everything about himself and his trade and had apparently told it at great length, Wordsworth had paid so little attention that:

> My question eagerly I did renew,
> "How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

There is no other example in literature of so boring a listener. If the leech-gatherer had not been a man of saintly patience, he would, being in a lonely place, have raised his "long grey staff of shaven wood" and brought it down with a crack on the skull of the greatest poet of his age. Possibly, however, he, too, had a nervous suspicion of mental derangement, for, instead of behaving in the natural manner of a busy man interrogated by an interfering poet,

> He with a smile did then his words repeat.

Was the smile a smile of saintliness or of apprehension? We shall never know, for Wordsworth was not observant of such matters. He was content to draw his moral, and to immortalise the old man in a poem with the sub-title "Resolution and Independence."

He might well have affixed the same label to the old man who collected the cigarette-butts. The butt-gatherer, too, was a model of resolute purpose in a world that seemed to have no purpose but the pursuit of pleasure. Compared with him, everybody else on the front appeared to stroll listlessly through the light of the May morning. He had the eagerness of a wild creature in search of its prey. The rest of us were, beside him, little better than indolent parasites. As for independence, he had cut down his wants to a minimum. He could cheerfully go without things that the rest of us could not go without. He was free from the burden of vanity and self-consciousness. He did his morning's hunting, careless of the eyes that watched him, careless of everything but the store of stale tobacco that he was collecting, and out of which, when he got home, he would build his own Paradise. I wish I had had the sense to give him a packet of cigarettes so that the gates of Heaven might have swung open for him more easily. Y. Y.

TOWN AND COUNTRY

IF this generation continues to bungle the second industrial revolution now in progress will make complete the havoc of the first. Wordsworth said a century ago that the discovery of steam power saved the country because the industrial revolution, after beginning on the banks of peaceful streams, was thereby diverted to the towns. The towns suffered, but for the moment the country was saved. This was not quite true even in Wordsworth's day, but now, of course, the truth is just the opposite. The forces that took factories and population into the towns are spreading the towns over the country. Indeed, it looks as if our fathers, having ruined the towns by their efforts, are to ruin the country by their example. All the forces of the hour are combining against the English village, that "miraculous relic," as Mr. Chesterton described it recently, of which he could not find a copy in all his travels from one end of the United States to the other. That is why town planning legislation is needed so urgently to carry further the effort begun in Mr. Burns's Act of 1909 to repair the most conspicuous failure of the nineteenth century. For the relation of public health to the general surroundings and conditions of life was missed, and our rulers thought much less about the form and order and look of their towns than the people of the Hellenistic Age.

The history of public health is an excellent illustration both of our virtues and our defects. In one aspect it is a most impressive story. Rather more than a century ago a few doctors, Currie of Liverpool, Percival and Ferriar of Manchester, set out to dissipate the prevalent apathy and ignorance of the great towns and their rulers on the subject of disease in relation to poverty, dirt and conditions of employment. They produced the first reforms. A generation later other doctors like Southwood Smith, Lyon Playfair, Duncan of Liverpool, acting with public men like Chadwick and Shaftesbury, aided by Dickens and Delane, and by still more powerful allies, two epidemics of cholera, persuaded Parliament to legislate on public health. The series of efforts that followed from those beginnings are admirably described and discussed by Sir George Newman in his new book *Health and Social Evolution* (Allen and Unwin), the work of a doctor who is also a distinguished civil servant and a man of letters and wide culture.

The story illustrates one aspect of the nineteenth century, the interaction of educated opinion and government policy. In some cases there have been strange omissions. Governments undertook a great deal of building without ever making use of architects. Even in the case of doctors, partly owing to Chadwick's prejudices against them, governments, as Mr. and Mrs. Webb have shown, made great blunders over

the medical administration of the Poor Law. But doctors, acting partly, like Sir John Simon, as advisers to Commissions and Departments, partly like Duncan of Liverpool and J. H. Bridges, as executive medical officers, had a great influence on the development of measures for protecting public health. The story told for Great Britain by Sir George Newman is told excellently for Liverpool by Dr. E. W. Hope (*Health at the Gateway*, Cambridge Press). Liverpool was in some senses a pioneer, for Duncan persuaded the town to adopt an Act in 1847. which became a model. So far as health and sanitation go, the achievement of the century is remarkable. "A child born to-day," says Sir George Newman, "has an expectation of life eighteen years longer than a century ago." To understand how this has happened the reader has only to follow the illuminating and discriminating description of the century in Sir George Newman's pages, or to see in Dr. Hope's book the range and variety of the tasks undertaken by a great modern city.

This achievement illustrates one of the virtues of English public life. At all times men of public spirit have been able, often, it is true, after long and patient effort, to get some particular abuse overhauled and remedied. There is no country in which disinterested agitation, the pressure of persons distressed by the sight of remediable wrong, is so well worth while, so productive of result. On the other hand, there is no country in which governments, central or local, are slower to take long views. How slow our fathers were to undertake the larger tasks is shown in the case of the water supply of our new towns; a subject on which Mr. Dakyns contributes an article to the *Manchester School*, the interesting periodical published by the economists connected, either as teachers or otherwise, with Manchester University. The complete disregard of town planning is another example. Whenever Committees or Commissions have examined our sanitary conditions, as in 1844 and 1869, they have always said the same thing: "If only people had planned a little twenty or thirty years ago!" We went on patching and cleaning in parts while allowing our towns to grow further and further into the country without regard to beauty or health, though each generation saw that it was because this larger task had been neglected in the past that the cleansing of our towns had so often to be begun again. Regional planning, which is the need of to-day, is infinitely more difficult because town planning was neglected when the town was still the unit of a self-contained life. To-day, as Mr. E. D. Simon showed in his book on the government of Manchester (*A City Council From Within*), we suffer from the same deficiency. The day-to-day work of administration is well done; the work that needs imagination and foresight is often neglected. For that reason, too much must not be expected from the Town Planning Bill. And regional planning may easily become the planning of motor roads and the destruction of beauty and open spaces in the name of enlightened administration. The *Daily Herald* said the other day that the Government had sanctioned the expenditure of £68,000,000 on road improvements, and in a delighted description of the benefits to be expected remarked that in one place, by means of raising the summit of a hill, the north-bound motorist would have now a view of four miles instead of 100 yards. When we recall how pitiful is the progress we are making with the slums and how desperate a fight a handful of Englishmen have to put up for a few thousand pounds whenever a fine piece of landscape is in danger, we see how much more ready the authorities are to spend money playing tricks with nature, as the *Daily Herald* puts it, in order to give the motorist a better view than they are to spend money on abolishing the squalor of the slums or saving the beauty of the countryside. This is a case in which the best hope of success lies in the co-operation of unofficial and official bodies, some statutory arrangement by which bodies like the Royal Institute of British Architects, the National Trust, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the Archæological Societies, and the National Playing Fields Association can exert a definite and effective influence on administration. For we cannot trust in this case to individual and spasmodic protests; we need to give a permanent power to the organisations that collect and mobilise what sentiment England has for her past and her beauty. The land taxation scheme in its present form would lay us open to the charge of a similar indifference about the countryside.

J. L. HAMMOND.

THE VOICE OF THE COUNTRY

"The Liberal Party was standing between the country and the decision it desired to make."—SIR ROBERT HORNE.

SINCE the Liberal creeds, as I learned them, entail
That the will of the people should always prevail,
It stuns me to find that Sir Robert implies
That the Liberal Party that freedom denies;
Yet he must have meant something; to settle the doubt,
I've been trying to puzzle his argument out.

And it seems to run thus: "When the Parties are three,
If *two* on immediate issues agree
(Such as foreign relations, disarmament, trade,
And the pact that Lord Irwin with Gandhi has made),
Then the voice of the country can never be heard
If they do not surrender the reins to the third.

"If a Party desires to postpone an election
Till a voting reform shall ensure the selection
Of a House that shall really reflect, as a whole,
The views of the people who went to the poll,
It is striving to silence the national voice
By pedantic insistence on freedom of choice."

Well, it may be all right—and I may be a fool!
But this isn't the logic they taught me at school. . . .
Or is it, perhaps, that I hadn't the gumption
To hit on Sir Robert's initial assumption?
For his argument's perfectly sound, if you'll own
That "the country" consists of the Tories alone.

MACFLECKNOE.

THE UNIVERSITY SUPPLEMENT

WE propose to publish next autumn a supplement composed exclusively of contributions from the younger members of British Universities. We should like to see what sort of paper they would produce if they had matters all their own way. We have in mind a sort of miniature NEW STATESMAN AND NATION written by a new generation of authors.

In this connection we offer four prizes of 10 guineas each for contributions written by men or women members of British Universities, who are not more than twenty-six years of age on October 1st, 1931, and who are not members of the teaching staff. The prizes will be for (a) an article of not more than 1,700 words suitable for a "leader" in the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

(b) an original contribution of not more than 2,000 words of a descriptive or imaginative kind—a short story, sketch, or essay.

(c) a piece of literary or artistic criticism.

(d) a poem which can be as short as it likes, but which must not exceed 60 lines.

Undergraduate writers contributing to their organs are naturally thinking of a small and esoteric public. In writing for us they will do well to bear in mind the nature of the opportunity and problems offered to the journalist who writes for a large and mixed audience. But nothing that we say here is more than a suggestion. Our contributors will have a perfectly free hand to produce what seems to them best. We hope that they will write about any topic that interests and excites them at the moment. We merely wish to point out in regard to the political, social or economic leader that it is wise to be in a measure concrete; to write, that is to say, not an abstract essay, but a leader which, while based on an understanding of theory, has an immediate and topical relevance. Thus, "What Ought the Political Parties now to be?" is a better subject than "The Foundations of Political Parties"; "The Probability of a Puritan Reaction in England" a better subject than "Puritanism" in the abstract. "What Ought the Government to Do About the Slump?" or about The House of Lords, or about Disarmament, or about the Countryside, are all suitable topics, while "The Causes of the World Depression," "Second Chambers," "Disarmament," "Rural England" would be unlikely to make good leading articles.

As to the poem—but it is no good giving advice to poets in verse or prose. The remaining prize will be given for the best piece of critical work, whether of a book, a poem, a play, a film or musical composition. Here again the critic has the freest of free hands.

Contributions which seem worthy of publication, but which are crowded out of the Supplement, will be published in subsequent numbers of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

All contributions should reach us by the end of October.

Correspondence

THE LAND TAX AND THE COUNTRYSIDE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—We, the undersigned, being in general sympathy with the Liberal or Labour Parties, desire to associate ourselves with the letter of Professor Trevelyan and Mr. Keynes on this subject in your issue of May 9th.—Yours, etc.,

H. A. L. FISHER. MARY MURRAY.
R. GLEADOWE. GILBERT MURRAY.
BARBARA HAMMOND. H. W. NEVINSON.
J. L. HAMMOND. A. MAUDE ROYDEN.
J. A. HOBSON. ARNOLD J. TOYNBEE.

AFRICAN CHIEFS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The comments in your issue of May 9th apropos the evidence given by native witnesses before the Select Committee on closer union in East Africa, seem to show a lack of understanding of the essential differences between the position of native chiefs in Kenya and Tanganyika respectively.

In Tanganyika the chiefs are both judges and tax-collectors—and I have been assured both by officials and non-official Europeans that both these powers are often grossly abused; no wonder that the Governor is popular among them! I may add that during a visit to Tanganyika two years ago I never met anyone, official or otherwise, who had a good word to say for Government House policy in this respect.

I do not wish to defend British policy in Kenya, especially that part of it which is dictated by settler or missionary interest; but I believe that the native commoner is there, on the whole, more justly treated by our own officials than by the chiefs in Tanganyika, where the old Arab traditions of corruption are deeply ingrained.

It must be realised that to the childlike natives we stand, for better or for worse, *in loco parentis*; and what may be considered as a schoolmaster system in Kenya seems more likely to advance their welfare than the corrupt "prefectorial" system in practice two years ago, at any rate, in Tanganyika.—Yours, &c.,

The Stance, West Runton, Norfolk. JOHN SOLOMON.

[In regard to Tanganyika, our correspondent seems to contradict himself. But the rule of the chiefs is, of course, liable to abuse, and we have heard of several cases of abuse which have been properly dealt with by the Government. The fact is, however, that the natives seem to prefer the rule of their own chiefs even when it is less good than that of the white foreigner. In response to public opinion, the Government of Kenya has recently begun to increase the powers of native chiefs and to make them responsible for tax-collection as in Tanganyika.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

CRIME AND PUBLICITY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The very real problem you discuss herein—how far in the earlier stages of criminal proceedings publicity should be restricted—would be promptly and, I think, satisfactorily solved, if English law were brought into line with Scots law in this respect.

Scotland is legally a "foreign" country, but our relationship still continues friendly. Therefore, the adoption of our system, whereby substantially nothing but the bare facts of arrest and nature of charge are all that the public knows till the actual trial, would be a tribute to the realisation as far as humanly possible of what we all desire—completely fair dealing and entire justice, tempered with mercy.

Moreover, such a step carrying with it an assurance of humanity would go some way to compensate for the somewhat meagre attention given to Scottish affairs at Westminster.

I can think of no murder trial in modern times in Scotland, where the verdict left any substantial doubt as to its justice in the minds of the people; whereas it is common ground that such has not been the case in England. This, of course, does not and could not entail any reflection on any one, but on a procedure which allows a vast amount of preliminary and irrelevant publicity.—Yours, etc.

Mansfield, Wemyss Bay, R. LORIMER.
Renfrewshire.

THIS SUNDAY BUSINESS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—My neighbour, Mr. Goldring, views with contemptuous amusement the attempts of his allies to conciliate their opponents by protesting their abhorrence of the Continental Sunday. He regards even this concession as a sign of weakness, and hastens to vindicate foreign usage with comparisons meant to be adverse to the English institution. To this end he avoids the responsibility of detail; but relies upon sonorous phrases like "democratic day of rest and recreation," "personal liberty" and "religious toleration." That the business of trade is transacted on Sundays abroad is a trifle conveniently ignored. Then follows the audacious assertion that "in countries that enjoy the Continental Sunday Christianity is most alive," but there is no attempt to substantiate it, as there should have been if the assertion had been far less audacious. Yet English travellers have all along reported, from impartial observation, that in countries where the Catholic conception of Sunday prevails the standard of moral deportment is markedly lower than elsewhere. In the first decade of this century an Archbishop of Rouen publicly held up the English Sunday as a model of what the *dies dominica* should be. So that Mr. Goldring's mode of supporting a plausible cause is in the last degree ill-advised.

The destroyers of our Sunday never so betray their case as when they ascribe our protests to religious intolerance. High-minded agnostics have probably nearly as much respect for the English Sunday as the orthodox Christian, though certain theological aspects of the day cannot appeal to them. It has been well said that if there were no longer a Sunday to relieve the storm and stress of modern life, we should have to invent an equivalent. Some time set apart in which the harassed but not unaspiring wage-earner is free to realise himself in leisured reflection, profitable converse, music, communion with nature, and the study of literature, is indispensable to the soul. The cinema and the public-house, defended with ironic chivalry by Mr. Goldring, are lowering influences. He and his friends can

only get away from that by saying that bad is good, or that there is no such thing as a lowering influence. All but recrudescents, however, seek what is lofty in the mental and moral areas. The apotheosis of man is not exactly furthered by the encroachment of these pursuits upon a seventh day in addition to the six; and good humanists cannot desire for others what they would spurn for themselves.—Yours, etc.,

LINDSAY S. GARRETT.

17 Wakefield Street, Regent Square, W.C. 1.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Those who insist that the observance of Sunday is a logical consequence of the fact that the Old Testament contains a code, or, to be quite exact, three versions of a code, do not seem to be aware of certain difficulties which seem to invalidate their arguments. If it is incumbent on all, Christians and rationalists alike, to keep the Jewish code, it is obvious that we must keep the accepted Decalogue as a whole and not only such parts of it as are in fact customary at the present day. It is equally obvious that no part of the code can be varied without due authority for the change, and that if the Jews of the present day do not accept as valid a change that commends itself to others, the non-Jewish practice must in that case rest upon logical grounds. If Mr. D. M. Mason will read the version of the Decalogue in the Book of Exodus (chap. xx), he will find that the observance of the Sabbath is based upon the traditional story of the creation of the world in six days and that the seventh day (Saturday) is the Sabbath. Are we to understand that the Sabbath has been transferred from Saturday to Sunday? If so, when and by whom was this done and why do not the Jews accept the change? Does Mr. Mason assert that the Saturday Sabbath of present-day Jews is a breach of the Commandment? If not, why does he assert that the observance of Sunday is an obligation resting on the Decalogue?

Even if this difficulty can be cleared up, it is by no means obvious that other Commandments are kept in their obvious meaning. Take the prohibition which says that no likeness of anything may be made. Has Mr. Mason never had his photograph taken? If so, how does he reconcile it with the Decalogue? If he discards this Commandment, why may not other people also choose what they will observe?

The Decalogue was not, of course, faithfully observed by the Jews of whose backslidings we read in the Old Testament. It is a trifle ridiculous to seek to impose on non-believers a code which was neglected by the people in whose sacred books it is found.—Yours, etc.,

Grove Cottage, West Malvern. NORTHCOTE THOMAS.

THE IDEAL HOME?

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I went to the Ideal Home Exhibition being a seeker after ideals. But the home evades me, it is always just beyond my reach, so I had to turn away from houses and look at the lesser "ideals" that go towards the whole. In this mind I wandered through the exhibition, and in so doing came across "The Living Picture Gallery." At once I realised how widely "ideals" vary, but surely those who lead in the forming of ideals should beware lest they lead astray.

I felt very much astray as I walked down that thin corridor of "living pictures," for what purpose *next* will man use little sensitive living creatures, born for freedom and the open skies!

These "living pictures" are small glazed compartments, most of them about two feet long by nine inches wide, with fronts resembling picture frames. The backs and sides of the compartments are painted to represent natural scenery or art interiors, and in each small cramped space live birds and little animals. The cases are fitted with artificial light, and I suppose some air, but they look exceedingly airless. Clever they are, but the beauty is lost in the diabolical cruelty of the idea.

All day long these prisoners must pose for man's selfish pleasure. The people who were gazing at them whilst I was there were not, I think, impressed by the cleverness of the represented suggestion, for the chief remarks I heard were, "Poor little things," and "They don't look happy, do they?" No, indeed they don't!

To give some of the "picture" titles.

All in a Row: About a dozen waxbills in a small place painted with tropical scenery, and one slender twig curving up from the floor on which they must all rest in a tight row, or nowhere at all. They looked puffed and unhealthy, and they are as a rule such bright, trim little creatures. What a blessing they cannot understand the mockery of the painted boards behind them.

Black and White: A very small picture painted in black and white with a number of lovely little bickenos finches, carrying out the colour scheme.

Winter: A stark woodland winter scene, and two lovely tropical humming birds (creatures of the sun), one on a slender branch, the other crouching on the ground, pretty near the end I thought. What a clever suggestion for "Winter," the real torture of contrasts.

Bird of Paradise: So *that* is Paradise! Poor lone bird.

Peace: Two Indian doves in a cramped little space with a kind of wooden pedestal to sit on.

Brilliant Hues: A case of those delicate and delightful Gouldian finches from Australia. Birds who love to cling to tall grass stalks, and gently sway as they hunt for food, then sweep upwards to the tree tops in a shining cloud of colour with joyous twittering. Here there is no swaying or joyousness, only a picture title.

So on, and so on—one dreadful picture after another.

Babes in the Wood gave me the same kind of heartache that the story did as a child.

Truly the whole thing is the wrong ideal for a British Home Exhibition. Are we to have these pictures in our homes?—Yours, etc.,

T. FISHER-SMITH,
Fellow of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

6 Observatory Gardens, Campden Hill, W. 8.

THE JURY SYSTEM

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—There is a printer's error in the last paragraph of my letter last week, from which you have inferred that I propose abolition of the jury system. Let me hasten to say that I called it a *pis aller*, but I agree with you that it is the best system available and I do not advocate its abolition. All that I advocated is, I hope, clear in my letter.

By the omission of brackets enclosing the sentence of Lord Darling's, it appears that the words "*delendi sunt*" had reference to "jurors." This was not so. They referred to "certain grave shortcomings" above, which "impair that degree of objectivity, etc."—Yours, etc.,

7 Catherine Street, S.W. 1. D. GRAHAM HUTTON.

MORE PINPRICKS OF PUBLICITY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Why on earth should your anonymous contributor assume—in his article, "Pinpricks of Publicity"—that every autograph-hunter is a female? True, he quoted a choice specimen, but the talent which conceived it is not exclusively feminine. I might just have well dubbed it *masculine*, for in my own case, and that of a friend, our letters have been from Hard-boiled Hermans, not Soft-soap Sophies.

However, I recognise a great similarity of style, if not of matter, and feel uneasily that something ought to be done about it, without knowing what to suggest. Lucrative investments (for the cost of postage) are made every day by these people, who in devious and subtle ways seek to draw out of the innocent author not merely signature, photograph, a manuscript copy of "a favourite passage" and opinions on the Great Hereafter—*but a free copy of the book as well.* I have been warned against a gentleman in California by a fellow-sufferer. This man sends to the victim's publisher, for forwarding, a gilded laurel-wreath (paper), together with the generous announcement that he has considered the victim's claim to fame through many nights and days, and has at last deemed him worthy of inclusion in his *own* "Order of the Laurel-Wreath." P.S.—Kindly forward an inscribed first edition for library.

It hardly seems possible, but roughly, there it is, and, alas! the scales are heavily weighted to their advantage. The young author is flattered by the bunkum, even while he sees through it, and too often feels it would be ungracious to refuse. So one more signature, photograph or whatnot goes across the Atlantic to enrich the collection of Herman or of Sophie. *But not of Sophie alone;* that is my point!—Yours, etc.,

ANOTHER MODEST AUTHOR.

225D Elgin Avenue, Maida Vale, W. 9.

PRISON FOR THE POOR

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The gem of your contributor's letter will bear repetition but not comment. "No civilised State," he says, "should impose the punishment reserved for criminals upon *respectable citizens who neglect civil obligations*." The italics are mine.

Your contributor's statement that "there are, no doubt, other people who would like to revert to the custom of primitive times when the debtor became literally the slave of his creditor," with its untrue inference that I advocate a return to the *status quo* before 1869, is not honest controversy. He would have been better employed answering any one of the questions I put to him. As for the examples for which I asked, if these would fill every page of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, it should not be difficult to select one which does not take up more than a few lines.

But what I am chiefly concerned with is the remarkable statement that "at present the punishment which Mr. Wechsler favours applies solely to weekly wage earners, since the system of judgment summonses followed by committal orders is restricted to the County Court which is now, as always, the poor man's court." It is a pity your contributor has chosen to overlook the hundreds of judgment summonses dealt with by the High Court each year, but if he really wishes to confine himself to the County Court I would recommend him to spend an hour at the Westminster County Court. There he will be enlightened by hearing judgment summonses against business men, professional men, actors and actresses, and titled persons, many of whom are proved to have incomes of £100 a week or more.

Both the High Court and the County Court figures are interesting. During 1930, 714 judgment summonses were issued in the High Court on which 195 orders for payment by instalments were made; 133 committal orders were made of which only fifty-one were issued for execution. Of these nine are still outstanding, thirty-eight were withdrawn because the debtor paid, and the remaining four debtors went to prison. One was released on payment after four days.

In the County Court no fewer than 249,301 judgment summonses were issued in 1929. Committal orders were made on 119,473 or just under 50 per cent., of which 3,484 were executed. This means that out of 200 debt defaulters, against whom actions have been brought and judgments obtained, approximately 197 either pay by instalments or go free without paying at all. The remaining three go to prison.—Yours, etc.,

5 Bedford Row, London, W.C. 1. T. MAGNUS WECHSLER.

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In Germany a common method of enforcing the payment of debts incurred by persons of the working classes is for the creditor to obtain a court order distraining part of the debtor's wages. This order is served on the *employer*, who is thereby compelled to hand over a certain portion of the employee's weekly wages to the creditor until the debt (plus legal costs) is paid.

This system, if introduced into this country, would probably prevent a great deal of imprisonment for debt.

When our Army of Occupation was on the Rhine such orders were frequently served on G.H.Q. and individual employers, but no action could be taken as the Army was subject to British jurisdiction only.—Yours, etc.,

Dover. RICOCHET.

BURLESQUE AND PARODY

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Ordinarily a review of a book should be left alone, but will you allow me to submit that Richard Sunne's review of my book, *A Survey of Burlesque and Parody*, calls for a word of protest, not against his opinion of the book (with which I do not meddle here), but against one or two misconceptions in the course of the review?

Richard Sunne objected that I treated Mallock's *New Republic* along with prose satires (such as Street's *Autobiography of a Boy*) of the "Decadence," as if I had not been aware of the date of the New Republic (1877), which precluded its being an attack on the "Decadents" of the 'nineties. But he must be aware that the "Decadent" rot had set in long before the 'nineties, and that Mallock's masterly satire is most precisely aimed at the same unhealthy tendencies as Hitchens and Street exposed at the turn of the century.

Again, your reviewer objects that I gave no place in the *Survey* to Harry Graham. That writer has his place as a verse humorist (and a very good place), but he is not known particularly as a parodist.

The larger objection that I have observed no order, either of chronology or by authors, is flatly contradicted by a glance at the detailed contents list. Where I have deserted chronological sequence for a moment it is always with warning and a "by your leave." Perhaps the part Richard Sunne had in mind was the late Victorian, where the mass of parodists do bunch together rather awkwardly. I confess the difficulty at that point in the text. Richard Sunne seems to have concentrated his attention on that restricted portion of the book. But that is perhaps understandable.—Yours, etc.,

2 West Castle Road, Edinburgh. GEORGE KITCHIN.

[Richard Sunne writes: "I assumed that Dr. Kitchin had forgotten Mallock's date because on page 348 he writes 'We refer to the parodies and satires which appeared in the 'nineties and their names,' Mr. H. Mallock's *New Republic*, G. S. Street's *Autobiography of a Boy*, Hitchens' (sic) *Green Carnation*. Unless he had actually stated 'published in 1895,' I do not see how Dr. Kitchin could more clearly have said that *The New Republic* was a book of the 'nineties. Actually Mallock's satire is very slightly concerned with 'decadence'—Pater (Mr. Rose) occupies such space compared with that given to Ruskin, Jowett, Huxley, Tyndall and W. K. Clifford. As for Harry Graham, his parody of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* is as masterly as some of Evoe's. I 'concentrated my attention' on the modern chapters of the book, because those dealing with our older literature were quite lacking in freshness of treatment. The fact that Dr. Kitchin calls attention to his book's disorderliness does not make it an orderly volume."—ED., *N. S. & N.*]

MODERN GERMANIES

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR.—In THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of May 2nd, 1931, I find the anonymous review of the book by Cicely Hamilton, *Modern Germanies*.

A reviewer is free, of course, to say what he likes about a book, and in this respect I have no comments to offer. But your reviewer then goes on to express a personal view on modern Germany, which, I must confess, leaves me surprised at the extent of his or her ignorance of the real state of affairs.

Your reviewer's knowledge of history seems to be inadequate. Only one example of many I could quote. He speaks about "bands of soldier-priests," pressing "through the Lithuanian jungle to found the cities of Memel, Riga, Reval and Narva." But this is quite wrong. Riga, Reval and Narva, too, were founded by arrivals from the sea, who had nothing to do with the "jungle of Lithuania." And, of course, your reviewer's statement that "the Slavic-Tartar East became the Christian portion of the German people" is inaccurate in each word, as well as in its general sense.

This amazing statement about the Slavic-Tartar East is current among the extreme reactionaries of the Right in Germany, and supplies the key to the question where your reviewer found his or her inspiration to say that to the east of the Elbe is cradled the hope of young Germany. But, Sir, your reviewer's statements about the peasantry in that part of the Reich is all nonsense. The peasants there are waiting not for a religious revival, but for protection against their landlords, whose latifundia cover the land, preventing the growth of new peasant holdings, and pressing down the economic level of the existing ones. Every serious German man of science, whether conservative or radical, will tell you this. Democratic Germany, Socialist Germany, is up in arms to fight this evil. Until now it has not succeeded.

Fortunately your reviewer is right in one thing; he, or she, says that "this youth is, as yet, but a tiny minority." If he, or she, means the reactionary youth identified with the anti-democratic Nazi movement then he, or she, is right in the sense that the German nation refuses to be governed by it. Still, to recommend that democratic opinion in Great Britain should give support to Nazi reactionaries of the blackest dye is contrary to the great liberal tradition of the country.—Yours, etc.,

49 Queen's Gate Gardens, London, S.W. V. POLIAKOFF.

LAND VALUES

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—The object of the proposed annual tax on land values is (1) to obtain revenue (2) to prevent the withholding of land from the market when there is a demand for it. Consequently all exemptions have to be carefully watched to see how they affect No. 2. It seems to me that the exemption of agricultural land values may prevent access to land for farming and allotments, in which case it will be very regrettable. I suppose, however, the exemption will not hold good, where land that has an agricultural value is being withheld for sport, or to provide a park. The tax works out at about one-twelfth of the annual value (one penny in the £ on the capital value), and should, if fairly applied all round, effectually prevent the selfish withholding of land from the market, wherever it is required for any useful purpose, whether urban or agricultural. Hence it will cheapen land. This is even more important than the yield of revenue, important though that is.—Yours, &c.,

Silkstone Vicarage, Barnsley. WALTER B. GRAHAM.

P.S.—The Lloyd George taxes of 1909 were not annual. They were on sales only, and were, therefore, totally different.

THE ANTI-BOLSHEVIK CREED

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—May I be allowed a reply to Mr. Farbman on the grave question about the forced labour in Russia?

The information comes mainly from three sources.

(1) Observations by foreign sailors in Russian ports. Not only Swedish, but also Norwegian, German, British and perhaps other ships, have visited the North of Russia, and opportunities have not been lacking of seeing prisoners being marched down to work on the ships guarded by soldiers with fixed bayonets, and of observing the degrading treatment of the unfortunate workers. Most of them are not criminals but political offenders.

A very telling fact is that all cameras must be kept under lock and seal as long as a foreign ship is within Russian territory (in the North). An innocent snapshot might be a witness that friends of forced labour would find difficulty in refuting.

(2) Fugitives who have succeeded in leaving Russia as stowaways on ships (also British), or by crossing the border of neighbouring States. Some hundreds have been able to escape in this way. Many others have been killed in the attempt. Can anybody believe that these people have risked their lives for nothing?

Just now a fresh wave of persecution is sweeping over the Finnish inhabitants of Ingermanland, the district around Leningrad. These stubborn and independent people have refused to give their small, hard-worked farms over to the Bolshevik collectives. The result has been that since February 6th this year one village after the other has been surrounded by Chekists, who have plundered the homes, sent the men to the apatite mines in the Kola peninsula in the Arctic, and the women to—other destinies. The day after Easter two hundred peasants were thus deported from Kelto and Rääpyä, and in all 7,000 men and women out of a population of 150,000 have been deported since Mr. Farbman in his secure home in London first began to contemplate his article about the improbability of forced labour in Russia.

The facts have been made known by refugees who have succeeded in leaving the terror-stricken country in spite of the strong guard that is kept on the border. It is obvious that the old population on the Carelian isthmus is threatened with complete extinction. The Ingermanland committee in Helsingfors has appealed to the American Red Cross for help. This shows something of how forced labour is recruited.

(3) Foreign journalists who have been allowed to visit the districts where forced labour is said to be employed. An example can be found in some articles in the Paris edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. They have been sent by its Moscow correspondent, Mr. Henry Wale, from Archangelsk on March 24th and 25th this year. If anybody who has read what Mr. Wale has seen of the sufferings of the tens of thousands of "kulaks," who have been collected from all parts of Russia and sent to find their living in the Arctic district, will still be able to question whether forced labour exists in Russia or not, then he does not use the words "forced labour" in the same sense as they are used in any civilised community.

Mr. Farbman's insinuation that the testimonies of Swedish sailors are not trustworthy, because Russian timber export presses on the Swedish timber trade, should not deserve any attention if it had not appeared in a journal of the standard of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. Of course, it is a Swedish interest that timber workers all over the world should be fairly treated and allowed to earn a decent living. But does that in any way prove that forced labour does not exist in the U.S.S.R.?

If the truth is not prevented from reaching the public, the Bolshevik authorities may at last find it suitable to modify their methods and relieve the sufferings of the people. That is the case that *I* want to see proved.—Yours, etc.,

Horn, Sweden. TORSTEN CEDERLUND.

BUYING BRITISH

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Mr. Cadbury and "Headmaster" are both at pains to rebuke me for quoting incorrect prices for bacon, incorrect, of course, because different from theirs (which, incidentally, do not agree). But surely it is common knowledge that these prices vary; their movements are as difficult to follow as the underground burrowings of Hamlet's father. This week, for instance (so says my original authority, the Army and Navy Stores list), the price of both Danish and English has gone up 2d.

And the bacon itself seems to have suffered a sea change. It has been turned into a red herring.

The object of my letter was not "bacon"; it was to try and arrive at a sound principle in spending. Ought we to follow an artificial rule and "Buy British" for the sake of "Buying British," as we are incessantly being exhorted to do, or ought we to lay out our money to the best of our judgment for the satisfaction of our needs?

I venture to submit that my homely example of the economic muddles, far reaching in their nature, which ensue when we dare to depart from this latter principle suggests the true answer to this question.—Yours, etc.,

10 York House, ELDRED HORSLEY.
Kensington, W. 8.

HANGING

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I was present at the double execution of Costello and Hobbs in Cork County Jail in 1925. I was under the impression that death was instantaneous, but I am pretty sure now that this is not the case. The Chicago authorities may not be as "scientific" in hanging matters as we are in England, but the fact remains that though the drop appeared to be enormous, the prison doctor did not declare either of them dead till after the lapse of fifteen minutes and twenty minutes respectively. To the ordinary spectator present it appeared to take about half that time before the ropes were quite still and the bodies ceased motion.—Yours, etc.,

May 6th, 1931. HORRIFIED.

MORE STREET REFUGES

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Last Saturday in the North End Road, Kensington, I was knocked down by a motor lorry. We are all of us wanted but not very much, and I do not suppose I should be particularly missed if my injuries had proved fatal. But the incident leads me to make a suggestion for the benefit of the public. In busy roads with a good deal of traffic, refuges in the middle which help the pedestrian to cross might be added where they do not exist. This would only be fair in view of the acceleration of motor cars. The drivers of lorries seem not unwilling to leave the quick and the dead behind them. Refuges might also tend to reduce the foolish habit I have noticed among motorists of swerving without apparent reason from one side of the road to the other.

In a motoring world supported by vast powers of advertisement and special writers the mere pedestrian seems to have no rights and is abused in the press as generally at fault. How any one person has seen enough accidents to entitle him to make such a generalisation, even if he claims unbiassed eyes, I do not know. After all, men and women must cross the street on foot sometimes, and their welfare may be as important to the community as that of the motor folk. At least, they are more active. When someone of real importance is killed or severely injured, I suppose a fuss will be made in the papers. I should not bother you with my own trivial case, if I had not a practical suggestion to offer.—Yours, etc.,

VERNON RENDALL.

Miscellany

FLORENCE KAHN

THERE has been for years no such sardonic commentary on the intellectual and imaginative poverty of theatrical London as the fact that an actress of Miss Kahn's supreme genius should go for her return, after twenty odd years, to a city so far removed from our town of false lights and thin reflections as Huddersfield. The honour belongs to that northern city, and to Mr. Alfred Wareing, who gallantly conducts, at the Theatre Royal, a campaign for good plays and, in this case at least, great acting against the lure of the silver screen. Miss Kahn has chosen for her return a play of Pirandello's—*The Life I Gave You*—in which the characters discuss that eternal problem: What is death? It is, to Pirandello, only another way of asking what life is; and at the play's end, when Donna Anna Luna, seeking to steel herself against disillusionment, proclaims that it is the preoccupied, conventional, ordinary living who are the busy dead, we feel that she, and perhaps the dramatist, is insisting that the soul dies once it abandons impulse and imagination. For in whatever life consists, it cannot consist in the automatic fulfilment of automatic duties, unlightened by any flash of the reality that comes from love that gives and receives in a continuous interchange of joy. The play opens with the death of Donn' Anna's only son who, after seven years' absence, has returned to her changed by his love for a woman, miserably married to an unfaithful husband. The son who returned is different from him who had gone away. All the years of his absence Donn' Anna has remembered and worshipped the boy as he went away, not the man as he became through his love for Lucia. He has been for her beautifully, terribly alive and real. So, now that he has gone away again, need he be any less alive, any less real? Is the separation of death more disastrous than the separation of change? Does she not, in reality, holding him in her heart, keep him more securely, more certainly closer than if he were still subject to the heart-rending fluctuations of actual existence?

Her sister and her parish priest argue with her—but fruitlessly. In a moment of indignation Donn' Anna reminds them that the death of the dead is only due to our hidden desire that they should remain dead, quiet in their cold graves, and out of our eager way. The dead are what they are because our indifference kills them. Then Donn' Anna discovers that Lucia, her rival in her son's love, seems to love him as she does, and she allows Lucia to come to their house, and does not tell her that her lover is dead. In illustration of the theme that human character is fluid, we are shown for a time the two children of Donna Fiorina (Donn' Anna's sister): they come home after a year at Pisa University, and to their mother's terrified ears and eyes each gesture, each word is a proof that her sister's belief, that our beloved ones are what we make them, that we alone preserve them from change, even the ultimate change of physical dissolution, has a strange wisdom in it. Lucia is angry and infinitely distressed to find her lover gone: she is carrying his child, for after seven years the lovers lose their control. When Anna learns this she postpones breaking the news of her son's death, and Lucia, persuaded by Anna's tenderness and love that in his absence, so unexplained, her lover is nearer to her, goes to sleep in her dead lover's room, decked by his mother with flowers and Lucia's portraits. The end comes quickly with the arrival of Lucia's mother—worldly, firm, urbane, armoured in hard sense. After a struggle of intolerable pain, Lucia consents to go away, and Donn' Anna abandons her belief that her son lives in her love, for has not his beloved dreamt of him as a dead man, and does not she possess what life is his, as in her womb she is bearing his child?

The play is too full of argument, and not full enough of human characters. Nor does Pirandello persuade us that Lucia would be sufficient to destroy that flaming faith of Donn' Anna's. Or is it that I confuse Donn' Anna with Miss Florence Kahn, the least of whose gestures has more authenticity than the greatest of speeches from other players? It is no injustice to Miss Dorothy Holmes-Gore, Miss Amy McNeill, Miss Louise Regnis and the rest to say that, had they exceeded tenfold their own high standard of acting, they could not have approached the region in which Miss Kahn moves with insuperable certainty. She is that rare being, an actress whose acting is creatively imaginative. The part in which she appears was written for Duse. Duse would not have been better in it. The whole performance is unforgettable; but at some moments reached heights that, in spite of their altitude, most evidently left the actress with perfect control and apparently inexhaustible reserves.

First as to her acting in general. With the very slightest make-up Miss Kahn so acted that her age seemed to vary from a young, happy maturity to an old age which had put the grave behind it; her face, from a look of flushed and youthful roundness, changed before one's eyes until there seemed nothing left but the grimness of a skull thinly covered with tormented skin. Her eyes, one moment full of a smiling and lovely affection, became dark pits of agony. And all the time, whether in hope or despair, she triumphantly surmounted the final test of great acting; she was not only a person, she was a symbol. There were moments when I knew it was for her Walter Pater wrote his laud of La Gioconda; there were moments when she was akin to John Donne's vision of dreadful death, at once the captain and the victim of the eternal worm.

Two supreme instances of her art must be mentioned. When she brings Lucia back from the railway station, Donn' Anna devotes herself, in a few moments, to the understanding and the comforting of this unhappy women. She cannot enlighten her—perhaps she never means to—about her lover's death. Soothing, enheartening, pitiful, beautifully tender Florence Kahn interprets for us Anna's own desperate straits, and Lucia's perplexed despondencies. She is lovely, convincing, truthful, bravely negligent of fact. Her whole body radiates confidence and conviction, as she leads Lucia into her bedroom. We hear them speaking . . . then a "Good night," clear, almost cheerful. Then slowly, haunted by the trouble of things past and the apprehension of things to come, the bereaved mother returns. She shuts the door, quietly, with a frightening, busy preoccupation. She leans against it—and in a flash the woman who was glad and confident, the giver of hope and radiance, has gone; as she droops there, and the burden of her ineluctable doom fills her heart and ours, she empties herself of strength and radiance, becomes in a second of time older than the centuries. Perhaps, however, Miss Kahn's greatest piece of acting was in the third scene, when Lucia hears from her mother, Donna Francesca Moretti, that her lover is dead. She stood, with her back to us, clothed in her long tight-fitting dress, stood as still, as alone as a tree in a forest. One can only attempt to express her power, her truth in metaphors—and any metaphor will be inadequate. Then, as she hears the agony and the despair of Lucia, the change comes. Herself she is the forest, she is the stillness, she is the tempest, she is the fire—and then there is the mortal change, and from all that life of stillness, of rage, of flame, she becomes a grey ash . . . hope has gone, desire is forgotten and faith has forsaken her. At the play's very end, after abandoning herself once to a torment of tears, Miss Kahn makes Donn' Anna sud-

denly suave and competent—it is as if Blake were to write like Horace Walpole, or Dostoevsky in the manner of Voltaire. She gives her own sense of beauty to the careful, calculated existence which means life to Lucia's mother, which means death to all who breathe with ease and freedom only in a world where the incalculable, even the capricious, so long as it is natural and lovely, has the mark of truth. In that brief moment one saw that Miss Kahn could be as superb in comedy as in tragedy.

Here is an actress who unites the claims of rare beauty with a spiritual intelligence only seen once or twice in a century: I hope it will not have to be said that London theatrical managers are so pusillanimous that Londoners will have to go to Huddersfield to see her act. Either in this play, or another—perhaps in a play of Ibsen's, whose poetic quality she revealed in her early acting—Florence Kahn should be persuaded to come to London.

R. ELLIS ROBERTS.

THE EXPERT AND THE AMATEUR

THE charming, witty, and increasingly dogmatic editor of the *Musical Times*, Mr. Harvey Grace, has been recently attacking the *Radio Times* for allowing non-musicians to write about music. The B.B.C. critics defended themselves, and neither side needs any assistance in the controversy. But the sympathies of the intelligent layman will not be with Mr. Harvey Grace and his whole-hearted and single-minded belief in the efficacy of the expert and in complete specialisation. He has by far the easier task in the discussion because nothing is so impressive as the assumption of knowledge, and indeed it is merely by writing the magical letters M.D. (I refer to the medical, not the musical degree) after his name that any incompetent fool may have license to destroy by his "knowledge" any ordinary and ignorant man's health.

And let us laymen (for in some fields every one of us is a layman) not be hoodwinked by any play with the word "knowledge." I warn my friend Dr., I mean Mr., Harvey Grace that if he is going to waste his time by replying to this article, he must not quibble about "knowledge" and say that he is referring to "*real* knowledge," and not merely to so-called knowledge. In my vast and daily accumulating experience I have never come across "real knowledge." I have only met with knowledge most of which was wrong and *all* of which—I repeat, emphatically, *all*—was incomplete. Therefore, in order to be as dogmatic as Mr. Harvey Grace, and not seem to belong to the camp of the B.B.C., which seems to me an institution that in some of its spheres is too intelligent to please or to convince, I will assert in the biggest bow-wow style I can command that the expert is the greatest of all frauds in every field.

Mr. Harvey Grace makes great play with a blunder he asserts he discovered in the *Radio Times*, when some musical amateur had "ascribed to Mozart a well-known work by another composer"! "Can we imagine," he says, "the musician-writer making a blunder analogous to that . . . and speaking of (say) Fielding's *Pride and Prejudice*? And if he did somehow manage to achieve such a howler, would it—indeed *could* it—escape the proof reader? Of course not."

Oh, the innocence of Mr. Harvey Grace! It is really charming in these days to come across a professional journalist who is so unsophisticated. Does he imagine that those who know that Fielding did not write *Pride and Prejudice* know it except by having memorised the fact! He has chosen two authors as unlike as possible, yet does he think that one could not select a passage from Jane Austen, not mentioning where it came from, and ascribe it to Fielding without a proof reader or the ordinary reader detecting it? The true expert, that expert held in such veneration by Mr. Harvey Grace, would no doubt have memorised the whole of the works of Fielding and of Jane Austen, and he would be able to place any passage infallibly. That is the nature of the expert, and that is the method of the expert, and I declare that æsthetically or artistically the whole of such expertise, of such expert knowledge is not worth a straw, and that when professors and doctors talk of knowledge this is what they mean.

Now, contrary to Mr. Harvey Grace, when I discovered that an amateur had ascribed to Mozart a work that was not Mozart's I would immediately ask what it was that made him think the work to be Mozart's? I would be inclined to see here not a "howler," but an act of individual judgment. I am not impressed by the mere knowledge of Mozart's compositions, and an ability to place the musical article by memory in the right catalogue. But if there were indeed any affinity or likeness between the work which was actually not Mozart's and Mozart's music, then this musical amateur was being truly perceptive when he made his so-called "howler." Mr. Harvey Grace is not a mere doctor of music, a human catalogue or mechanical academic expert, he is a sensitive musician, that is to say an artist, and he therefore knows quite well how difficult and subtle and intuitive real musical perception is and must always be. He also must know how often and how completely his beloved experts fail when called upon to exercise artistic judgment from a direct experience. I remember very vividly when a pianist played a little-known cadenza by Beethoven to one of Mozart's pianoforte concertos how very much at sea experts were. In every field the great mass of experts tested in this direct way collapse completely. And I would go further and assert that a consciousness of weakness in sensibility, in the power of direct immediate assent or dissent in many persons drives them to try to bolster up this weakness by acquiring what they call "knowledge" in the hope that this "knowledge," when acquired, will enable them to make the judgments which they cannot make directly.

But this "knowledge" is only a description, wholly inferential. It can never take the place of the direct intuitional judgment, nor can it ever by application of principles or analysis lead to an æsthetic valuation. Those who possess it, especially when they have been at great pains to possess it, will, however, recklessly apply it in judgment. Hence come the prosodists counting metre on their fingers. How many academic professors and experts dismissed Donne as a poet because they could not scan his lines! The experts are always engaged in displaying their knowledge, but its possible complete irrelevance to experience never strikes them. No man was ever enabled to experience a fugue by analysing a fugue. It cannot be too often or too emphatically stated that the analysis of a fugue is not the fugue, that the grammar and metre and dictionary meaning of the words is not the poem. Now Mr. Harvey Grace will say: "But you cannot understand the poem unless you know the meaning of the words, and this is what I mean by knowledge, and why knowledge is necessary and valuable." To this I reply that without the past experience which those words symbolise you cannot, even with a dictionary that gives all the words, understand the poem. It is not the knowledge of the expert, it is the experience of the human being that makes works of art intelligible.

W. J. TURNER.

A TAX IS PROPOSED ON . . .

MR. WINTLE rose with unwonted determination on his nondescript features. He had just realised that the obscurity of the room was due, not alone to the sunless and dripping skies of a 1930 summer, but more particularly to an edifice that rose between his writing table and the window.

With the strong silent energy of his favourite hero, he demolished the structure, removing with successive efforts six immense pots of dense vegetation and a foundation of fantastic china, elaborately and ornately hideous. With care he stacked these obstructions in the murkier recesses of the room, and, with lightened heart and eyes, settled down to his morning's work.

When his landlady entered, luncheon tray in hand, his subconscious self sensed an aura of hostility emanating from her formidable presence. The strong silent hero merged into a dumbstricken man, and Mr. Wintle, murmuring something unnecessarily futile about posting letters, fled from the awful presence. After a decent interval he cautiously ventured to return, and found the structure once more in its place. It required more heroism than he possessed to remain silent, and when Mrs. Merger again entered the room he feverishly broke forth into a disarming babble, assuring her that the pots were only removed for the moment, and that, given time, he would have replaced them himself.

Mrs. Merger maintained her attitude of stern displeasure, saying acidly, " Them haspidestras requires all the sun they can get, and must be kep' free from draughts. It don't do them no manner of good to keep opening the winder. Shifting them as was done this morning is death to them." The very tones of her voice took on the accents of one whose gods have been mocked, and the unhappy Wintle felt he had outraged and desecrated some mysterious deity that demanded the undeviating adoration of its worshippers. He learned that the value of an aspidistra lay in its leaves —the more it had the more it was worth, and to start a new pot a leaf from the parent plant was taken and enshrined in a sanctuary of its own, in its turn to become a vampire deity. He was vouchsafed a sight of some dozen of these embryo fetishes, which in angular isolation, to his fevered imagination, seemed secret and terrible menaces to light and air. A stranglehold on civilisation. Horror of the monstrous vegetation drove him forth at length, like the immortal and pious Æneas, pursued by fate.

Lost in an ecstasy of disgust, he wandered aimlessly, but as his vision cleared he started wildly and almost staggered.

Every window had its aspidistra, and it seemed as if the baleful vegetable glowered darkly, rancorously and menacingly. It might have been the " sending " of some vengeful Eastern magician. The panes of glass offered, however, a certain shelter, and Mr. Wintle, heroic soul that he wished to be, regained a measure of self-control. He would localise this enemy of the human race, as a census has always been feared and dreaded by the dark powers, he would count them. Note-book in hand, he walked up and down the streets of—but stay, let us not name the town—vengeance might yet befall. Suffice that it is a town of some three thousand inhabitants—and before Mr. Wintle had performed his task he had counted eight hundred and ninety-seven visible aspidistras. That meant eight hundred and ninety-seven windows that must never be opened and that would never admit a full measure of light.

The heroic soul turned with righteous indignation. How could this terrible bondage be broken? He saw himself a modern St. George tilting against an aspidistral dragon. Visions of a letter to the *Times*, or a question in the House floated before his impassioned mind. He felt the campaign against so subtle an enemy must not be undertaken unadvisedly. What could offer so secure a basis for the coming struggle as statistics? He must be armed with statistics. A mere vague mention of " many aspidistras " would alarm no one. He would count their leaves, and that at least would carry conviction. Every leaf a potent originator of more aspidistras. These noble aims kept our hero awake—I say our hero, for it can no longer be concealed that Mr. Wintle was a hero, noble and self-devoted. Note-book in hand, he started forth, and who will blame him that he elected to begin in the street furthest from the redoubtable Mrs. Merger? Knocking at the door in an alert official manner, he asked how many aspidistras there were in the house and how many leaves each one possessed. The woman who had opened the door stared, and seemed inclined to question his right to the information, but the official manner and business-like note-book awed her, and she gave the information with subdued pride. Five aspidistras were her contribution to the dark forces of this world, and their respective strengths were twenty-seven, fifteen, nine, seven, three. He tabulated the information, and dazedly she watched him leave and knock next door.

House after house he visited, and never once did his bearing falter, and never once was information withheld, but as a nest of ants may be disturbed by an inquisitive prod, so the peace and quiet of that nameless town was presently shattered. There began to be hurryings and scurryings and furtive carryings of hastily-wrapped parcels. Once or twice the door was opened by women weeping or red-eyed from recent grief, and almost before the question could be put came the half defiant " I don't 'ave no aspidestra." Wearied, but still heroically devoted to a Scheme for National Deliverance, Mr. Wintle at length turned his thoughts to food. His room looked unwontedly clean and bright. The structure and vegetation had vanished.

Mrs. Merger came in with disordered dress and red eyes, evidently a prey to violent sorrow. Her air of bereavement was too apparent for Mr. Wintle to resist a kindly inquiry. Tears and sobs broke forth afresh as she said :

" It goes to me heart, it does—to burn up me beautiful aspidestras, it does—they are all on the kitchen grate this very minute. I set such store on them, 'aving no children of me own." Amazement kept Mr. Wintle silent, and she added, " It's that Mr. Snowden—always wanting money. 'E's sent summun down to find out 'ow many haspidestras we got and 'ow many leaves there are. 'E might come 'ere any minute. They're going to tax 'em, and most of us are burning them up."

J. M. RICHARDSON.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

" Lean Harvest "

MR. RONALD JEANS'S *Lean Harvest* at the St. Martin's is a play for the play-fancier rather than for the philosopher. With so many stimulating oddities of technique, it is difficult not to reach at once for the scalpel without pondering the virtues or vices of the specimen laid out on the table. And this, though it sounds unfair in face of some deliciously polished dialogue, is probably the best way of dealing with the play. We need not worry ourselves unduly over Mr. Jeans's sad conclusion that too much money and too little money are equally dangerous to married happiness. Besides, he quite cheerfully cogs the dice to win our assent even to that proposition. When one frantic egoist like Nigel Trent marries another like Celia Hardman, the sparks will fly as merrily as two

hundred a year as on twenty thousand. The " panoramic " structure of the play and epigrammatic contrasts of scene thrust forward the generalisation too pointedly for the play to stand as an inconclusive study of individuals. Mr. Jeans has boldly adopted a film technique where it serves his purpose. For instance, Nigel Trent's death-agony is presented on similar lines to the brain-storm in *The Adding Machine*, and very effective it is. Against these triumphs —for the tricks are justified—must be set a less happy borrowing from the screen. Mr. Raymond Massey's one failure as producer in a play bristling with difficulties was the first scene, in which two emotional crises had to be sacrificed inevitably for the sake of the main action which was to follow, with a result of flat artificiality. Elsewhere Mr. Massey was brilliant. The dream fantasy was exquisitely done, and the delirium, though a drumming rhythm would perhaps have intensified it, was painfully vivid.

Some first-rate acting among a huge cast adds considerably to the effectiveness of the production. Mr. Leslie Banks seems to have increased both force and subtlety since he went to America, and his study of Nigel Trent as the ruthless go-getter financier, and as the puzzled, disappointed husband is superb. Miss Diana Wynyard improves with every new performance in which she is allowed to look imperious and cold while occasionally suggesting an underlying warmth of humanity in her voice. For these she has full scope as Nigel's wife with an additional advantage of wearing, most gloriously, about twelve different " creations."

English Echoes.

At the Leicester Galleries Mr. Sickert is showing a series of paintings entitled *English Echoes*, which is one of the best entertainments in town this month. Their sources are illustrations to Victorian periodicals, mostly by Sir John Gilbert. But these are translated into gay, radiant canvases, which are altogether as original as the black-and-white whence they derive. Their design, in its new form, has Mr. Sickert's individual impress in every line, his own unmistakable ease and grace. It is the richness of the colour that distinguishes this latest departure from his earlier phases, and makes the show so lively and invigorating. Here is an exhibition that need not be taken sadly, and is great painting at the same time. It is long, for instance, since any gallery has displayed a picture to arouse both laughter and æsthetic delight. Mr. Sickert achieves this with his lovely winter scene, *An Expensive Half-Sovereign*. And in many of the others, over and above the enchantment of their purely pictorial qualities, he throws in a wealth of humorous characterisation. He has never held that a good picture is anything but the better for telling a good story as well. So at the present exhibition he brings a century back to life, capturing the spirit that animated it as well as its external appearance. It is done with love and admiration, not in the scoffing manner of some contemporaries, yet all the time with an eye to fun. This shrewd and tender presentation of our ancestors is worth a good many volumes of history and biography. The legend of a Victorian drabness and straitlacedness has prevailed so strongly, and so much of our early acquaintance with the period comes from engravings to its novels, that we forget the colour and the sprightliness of the first decades. Mr. Sickert convinces us of the splendours and elegance, and gives a hint of the passions as well. We are carried away to a Golden Age, which blossoms into abundance of whisker and amplitude of bust. *The Beautiful Mrs. Smears* represents its idyll, *The Poison Cup* its melodrama, and *Glencora* its festivity. And each of the other pictures brings its point as well as its joy of colour and vividness of line. Mr. Sickert has given us the happiest of exhibitions.

A Rétrospect.

Sir William Rothenstein offers a restrospective view of his work at the Goupil Gallery. It is a fine record of conscientious performance, of radical receptiveness to contemporary movements, controlled by independence and tempered with reverence for tradition. Yet the fundamental brainwork which shines out from these pictures never reveals the bare bones of pedantry; it is fleshed with graciousness and alive with a generous delight in visible appearances. The painter of *The Doll's House* has never been content to rest upon his achievement. The same spirit of courageous exploration of his art is evident in the latest as in the earliest of his canvases. Each of them is alert with the spirit of youth, and this will keep them permanently alive and long hold the partisans of the artist's various phases in delighted argument. Some will advance the pictures painted under the influence of Whistler's impressionism, which have none of the disembodied ghostliness of his imitators, but stand out firmly and strongly on merits of their own—the *Study for Gordon Craig as Hamlet*, *A Girl in Black*, or the exquisite *Coster Girls*. They are splendid examples of vitality in a devitalised period, avoiding the pitfalls and ennui of the 'nineties, and gathering up instead the enthusiasm and the flicker of renaissance. But there will be as many to preach the middle period, the cool sunlit interiors and the tactile values of the pictures of the old farms in France and the Cotswolds—such mellowness and candour as is seen in *The Little Boy Lost* and *Interior of the Artist's Studio at Ilex Farm*. Then to disconcert both parties, will come the champions of the latest period, with it uncompromising realism and the beauty of its true, literal rendering in such scenes as *In the Loggia : Morning Work* or *Dent du Midi, from Leysen*. The debate will end in a tribute to Sir William Rothenstein's versatility, through which runs the continuity of sure development, the sense of a brave search after the artist's personal truth, and the radiant illumination of a temperament.

* * *

Things to see and hear in the coming week :

Saturday, May 16th—
Cricket, M.C.C. *v.* New Zealand, Lord's.

Sunday, May 17th—
C. Delisle Burns on " Education *versus* Social Caste," Conway Hall, 11.

Monday, May 18th—
" Dream of Gerontius," Queen's Hall, 8.15.
" Lohengrin," Covent Garden, 7.30.
" Roussalka," with Chaliapine, Lyceum Theatre.
Golf, Amateur Championship, Westward Ho !

Tuesday, May 19th—
" Die Walküre," Covent Garden, 5.45.
" La Fiancée du Czar," Lyceum Theatre.
Debate on " Following in Father's Footsteps," between Miss Megan Lloyd George, M.P., and Mr. Philip Guedalla, London School of Economics, 5.30.

Wednesday, May 20th—
" The Millionaire Kid," by Dr. Noel Scott, Gaiety Theatre.
" Die Fledermaus," Covent Garden, 8.15.
" Prince Igor," Lyceum Theatre.
Chelsea Flower Show, Royal Chelsea Hospital Gardens.

Thursday, May 21st—
" Roussalka," with Chaliapine, Lyceum Theatre.
Rowing, Eights week, Oxford.

Friday, May 22nd—
" La Fiancée du Czar," Lyceum Theatre.
" Siegfried," Covent Garden, 5.45.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

PARSON WOODFORDE is dead. He died on New Year's day, 1803. It would be ungracious to borrow Edward FitzGerald's mood expressed on the death of Mrs. Browning, and exclaim: "No more Woodforde diaries, thank God!" Yet I do feel that five volumes of the *Diary* is rather in excess of our needs. Mr. Beresford, who edits the last volume (Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.) with the loving care he has expended on the other four, is obviously not capable any longer of a critical attitude to Woodforde or the *Diary*. The Country Parson has long ago become an established member of his household, and nothing Woodforde does can really disgust him. His death is lamented by Mr. Beresford just as the death of a favourite patient is lamented by a faithful attendant; any sense of relief that may supervene will not be recognised, far less acknowledged. Of what Parson Woodforde died, at the age of sixty-three years, we are not told; but one can hardly help suspecting that it was of over-eating. It is true that one cannot assume that he invariably partook of the meals he chronicles with such unendurable pertinacity; there must have been moments when he sat apart and took his gruel. Not seldom in the diary do we find a note that, at certain times of illness, Parson Woodforde eat less than he was wont, and less than he liked; but unfortunately his standard of appetite was, I fancy, a high one. Here are two entries:

> 1798, July 8, Sunday. We breakfasted, dined, etc., again at home. Mr. Cotman read Prayers and Preached this morning at Weston C. My Niece was at Church, as were Mr. Custance and many of their children. Mr. Custance brought Miss Woodforde from Church (some Rain falling at the time) in his Coach. Dinner to-day, Shoulder of Mutton rosted, etc. I eat very little indeed for dinner to-day, being very poorly. Cloudy, hot, with Thunder Storms flying about. Mr. Custance did not get out of his Coach at Weston Parsonage.
>
> July 11, Wednesday. We breakfasted, dined etc., at home. Mr. Maynard made us a Morning Visit, but did not stay long. Dinner to-day, a very small leg of Pork boiled, etc. I made a pretty good dinner, but nevertheless have every symptom of an inward Fever, which I fear, gains daily on me as I find myself daily, weaker and weaker, inwardly. Pray God direct me for the best—and not my Will or wish.

* * *

Parson Woodforde is a pathetic creature; but the "nevertheless" in that last entry makes it a little hard to sympathise with him as he would have liked us to. While overmuch or injudicious feeding was certainly one cause of his ill-health, another may well have been too little occupation. His curates, Mr. Corbould, Mr. Cotman and Mr. Dade, successively take his duties for him, and very often in cold weather, and when suffering from the slightest indisposition, Parson Woodforde does not even go to the Sunday services. He even stays at home on Good Friday merely because it was "very wet all the whole morning." He might claim indeed to be one of the first sufferers from a disease well known among Victorian children—Sunday morning-itis; it rarely prevented its victims from anything except going to church. He shows himself a stickler for etiquette in this volume, as in its predecessors. Nancy, with her freedom of behaviour and of language ("very saucy") is still a disturbance to her uncle; and he comments with disapprobation on the conduct of Mr. Taswell, of Aylsham, who called, "dined and spent part of the afternoon with us. He behaved very free and easy. Left us about 5 o'clock in the evening—I did not press him to stay." I wonder whether Mr. Taswell realised how mortally he was snubbed. Perhaps he did, because the only other reference to him records his death, three years later, after "he had something of a paralytick stroke." Any impropriety, except in matters of diet, was certain to distress Parson Woodforde. There is the sad case of Susannah Field:

> She was almost always afflicted with fits and was a Poor Creature for many Years, and till within the last four years behaved tolerably well, but since that time her behaviour had been very indifferent indeed, having had a Bastard-child, and of the most consummate Impudence and Pertness to the Parish after it.

* * *

The physicians of Woodforde's day had a comfortable, if careless, custom of recommending port wine as a medicine. Nancy was stricken one March with a strange illness—she complained of "great coldness about her, cold streams running down her legs and arms, etc." The invaluable Dr. Thorne happened to call, administered camphor pills, and ordered her "to drink plentifully of Port Wine, at least a Pint a day." The remedy was successful with Nancy; but Dr. Thorne evidently erred when he recommended it to Parson Woodforde when he was "hot and feverish," because on the next day he records sadly:

> Sent Ben this Morning to Mr. Thorne at Mattishall after some Medicine for myself and Niece. We begun taking of the same, some time after his return. Mine was chiefly Huxoms Tincture and Bark. I took for the first time about 11 o'clock, some 4 Pills, of Camphire and Rhubarb, taken in Port wine, after that 2 Tea spoonfuls of Huxoms Tincture put into 3 Table spoonfuls of Bark Decoction. What I took of my Physick made me very flighty for a great while after taking it—flying so much to my Head, but in the Evening found myself much more composed and better for it. The Dr. ordered me to take it three times a Day but it affected my Head so much after taking it only once, that I took it only twice to-day.

It is difficult not to concentrate on food and medicine in writing about the *Diary*, but other things do get some mention. Public events during the years 1797-1802 include Nelson's victory of the Nile in August, 1798, news of which did not reach England till the late autumn. Norwich had its rejoicings on November 29th, and at Weston Mr. Cotman "read Prayers that morning proper to the occasion," and Parson Woodforde gave his "Servants that Evening after Supper some strong Beer and some Punch to drink Admiral Lord Nelson's health on his late grand victory." He continues his entry for that day in a manner which one would like to believe is ironical, but is, I fear, only blandly simple. I have italicised the suspicious sentence.

> Miss Woodforde recd. a letter this Morning from Richardson and Goodluck in London informing her of her having a Prize in the Irish Lottery which was entirely done unknown to me. It was a 16th Share in the Irish Lottery of a Nine Pound Prize. She paid for the Share eleven Shillings and sixpence and she will receive for her Share only 11 Shillings and 3 pence, by which Prize she will be out of Pocket 3d. if not more when it is received. *No rejoicings at all at Weston.* I should have been very glad to have contributed towards some, if Mr. Custance had come forward.

Nancy's investment was presumably out of her uncle's mind again when he regretted the absence of rejoicings, which he desired only for Nelson's victory.

* * *

I wish I could agree with Mr. Beresford that this entry "still thrills with the name of Nelson." The name of Nelson comes into it; but there is no more thrill in this passage of the diary than in any other part. Parson Woodforde preserves a patient pedestrianism from one end of his journal to the other. Equal in tone, flat in contour, grey in colour, his book cannot be said to have in it a single thrill. He chronicles his meals, his drugs, his acquaintances' misdemeanours, his religion, his business, his jaunts, his pleasures, and his opinions with a sober absence of discrimination that is almost a distinction in itself. When he is ill, and nervous, Parson Woodforde describes himself as "so so"; and that familiar expression is surely precisely right for Parson Woodforde and his Diary.

RICHARD SUNNE.

NEW NOVELS

The Road Back. By ERICH MARIA REMARQUE. Trans. by A. W. WHEEN. Putnam. 7s. 6d.

The Colonel's Daughter. By RICHARD ALDINGTON. Chatto and Windus. 7s. 6d.

The Good Earth. By PEARL S. BUCK. Methuen. 7s. 6d.

Copper City. By MYRON BRINIG. Cobden-Sanderson. 7s. 6d.

It is easy to say it, of course, when the hot breath of giant success is not on one's face, but—Herr Remarque should have left well alone. He killed his hero, if I remember rightly, on the last page of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and that should have been that. The protest was made. In *The Road Back* he has followed a line of small resistance, repeating his technical formula with a new "I" as narrator-hero, a newborn set of assorted soldiers, and the same (to English ears) tiresome mode of narration in the historic present tense. And in its essential ideas the book, for the most part, contains very little that was not implicit in its forerunner. Judged with *All Quiet* in mind, therefore, *The Road Back* will probably strike most readers as on the dull side; and judged as if its author's name were unknown, it offers only a rather rough-edged, raw, episodic, sensationalised picture of the tragic Germany of 1918-1923, and aims at a universality which it does not really achieve.

The story opens with that same sense of absolutely incessant drumfire and onrushing horror which made *All Quiet*, as a picture of the Western Front, so sensationally effective and so fundamentally fallacious. The decimated company is retreating, blindly, towards the disintegrating Homeland, and Herr Remarque, guiding them back to the provincial town of their recruitment, proceeds to follow up the careers of a chosen number of the shattered survivors. Now, there is no denying that conditions of life, or death, were a good deal worse on the German side in 1918-19, whether for soldiers or civilians, than in the Allied countries; indeed, to my mind the author hardly does justice to the dogged resistance put up by the starved and under-equipped German divisions during the last few weeks. Of course, there is a vast dark wealth of tragedy, and mere ugliness, in the damaged generation, or more accurately the individuals out of several generations, who "may have escaped the shells but were destroyed by the war," and Herr Remarque may well have felt it deeply and seen it widely. But of what he has seen or felt he has only preserved a series of partial glimpses, chosen with skill in presentation, and occasionally in dramatic force, but too flickering to stand as the true monument in fiction of its tragic epoch.

Mr. Richard Aldington, in *The Colonel's Daughter*, also surveys the post-war scene. For the most part he chooses as his observation-post a sort of Timonian cave:

> I . . . would send them back the plague,
> Could I but catch it for them,

he seems to mutter, as he broods restlessly over the appalling spectacle of the English middle-classes. Somewhere he speaks of the "host of fictions which make immense areas of English life appear to outsiders such a dreary and trivial blague"; and it is that overweening sense of dreariness and triviality and blague that vitiates much of his satiric intention. It is too easy. It makes him fall back on stagey caricature types instead of real characters. If Mr. Aldington wants to produce a colonel, it will inevitably be a mean-spirited blusterer gleefully assuring his wife that "Kitchener will make a long War of it. There'll be plenty of fun and plenty of pickings," and doing a great deal of the "don't y'know, what?" business. His wife to match. A clergyman or two to match. Village gentry to match. Even cocktailing "intellectuals" to match. True, his central figure, Georgie, the only and fading daughter of Colonel Smithers, is handled with a sort of veiling pity that makes her both real and moving (there are moments when she almost touches dignity and tragedy), but even with her he cannot resist the occasional stroke of crude exaggeration: "Have you ever meditated on the economics of this community?" she is asked by the priggish Purfleet:

> Georgie's heart sank lower. What were economics? And surely meditation was an Oriental indecency, practised by the lower castes of India?

But setting aside this perpetually irritating mannerism, Mr. Aldington's novel has a good deal of force, and on the whole repays one's impatience with his post-war acridness and pre-war criticism of life in general. The petty tragedy of the Smithers' downfall at the end is the most truthful, because the most subdued, act in the whole play.

How far *The Good Earth* may be taken as a truthful picture of peasant and village life in the China of the past twenty or thirty years, I know not. But according to her publishers, Mrs. Pearl Buck has had ample opportunity of watching her subject; and except for one book dealing with a more specialised field of Chinese affairs, I can recall no novel that frees the ordinary, flesh-and-blood, everyday Chinaman so satisfyingly from those screens and veils and mirrors of artistic and poetic convention which nearly always make him, to the Western reader's eye, a flat and unsubstantial figure of a pale-coloured ballet. Here no flutes of jade sound delicately across the moonlit courts, no meditative general sets brush to paper to catch for ever the susurration of dead leaves outside his door, no intricacy of self-abasing compliment unwinds itself from the lips of beggar or mandarin. In *The Good Earth* we are as far from these things as, say, Mr. Brinsley Macnamara is from the Celtic Twilight. And the result is that one really believes in this China.

Mrs. Buck does not compel one's interest by any particular dexterity in prose of inventiveness, but simply by the clarity and honesty of her narrative. Wang Lung is the humblest of peasants, a scratcher of the soil uncommonly glad to manage to sell a load and a half of reeds. He takes a wife, a slave girl allotted to him by a local lord. Here they are, returning to their home for the first time:

> Ho took out twopence and with these he bought six small green peaches.
>
> "Take these and eat them for yourself," he said gruffly. She clutched them greedily, as a child might, and held them in her hand without speech. When next he looked back at her as they walked along the margin of the wheat-fields she was nibbling one cautiously, but when she saw him looking at her she covered it again with her hand and kept her jaws motionless.

Crops from his fields, children from O-Lan, savings of silver buried in the earth—Wang Lung's view of life is in simple, progressive terms. But a drought brings famine, and famine a forced flight to the rich South. There is more here than the horror of famine (extremely well conveyed by the author), for Wang Lung is severed from his "good earth," and is left to begging in the street with his brood, pulling rickshaws, and the like. But a hazard of city rioting fills his wallet with gold and he is able to return, and even to prosper exceedingly, to the tune of a beautiful concubine and sons with book-learning. And the book closes with Wang Lung not only a grandsire, well-endowed with descendants, but standing also in a way as a symbol of a passing China. For faint and far-off, the rumour of revolution had come over the fields, and once a glimpse of strange men clad in grey, carrying mysterious tools with knives sticking from the end, let Wang Lung see for the first time what was meant when

> he had often heard men say from the time he was a child, "There is a war to the west this year," or they said, "War is to the east or the north-east." To him war was a thing like earth and sky and water, and why it was no one knew but only that it was.

Altogether, *The Good Earth* is not a book to be passed over. Only once, I felt, did the author force her note too strongly (with Peach Blossom): for the rest, it is stripped of undue sentiment and left taut with real feeling.

Whence to America. In *Copper City* Mr. Brinig offers a rich gobbety meal of strong meat and lush sentiment: plenty of sweating miners, deep libations, rude wenching, with a streak of superficially understood religion as one of the foil elements. There is a sort of recurrent deafening din about Mr. Brinig's writing that gives a rough-and-ready vigour to his tale. But too often he lets it run away with him. Here he is describing a "red light" district:

> . . . fierce, fierce, alive, alive. Men and women are as alive and staccato as drumbeats in a jungle, in an Indian camp. Women shriek, sob and scream. Men drink and howl and sing. Men are in combat with one another. They leap like sly animals or they wrestle like grizzlies. They breathe hard in a passion of lust or anger. . . . Life-life. Life-life. Life-life, swift in time, always in time. You pays your money and **you** takes your choice of the dizzy blondes, the bromidic brunettes, the rampaging red-heads. . . .

So no wonder that when young John Hennessy, fairly fresh from an Irish famine (dating apparently about 1910), swung into this terrible night-night, life-life of Silver Bow, and fell in with a "no-good dame" named Zola Peterson, he found trouble ahead. Such trouble, indeed, that after the final gun goes off and the patrol wagon drives off with John inside, his uncle Roddy is left by Mr. Brinig in the snow "thinking that the wonders, the beauty, the torment and ecstasy of life are too much for our poor, pale, monotonous words." Good, hard Hollywood.

PROTEUS.

A SOLDIERS' GENERAL

The Life of Field-Marshal Sir John French, First Earl of Ypres. By his son, Major the Hon. GERALD FRENCH. Cassells. 15s.

The public never really knew Lord Ypres by that title (conferred with his earldom in 1921), and on his monument in Ypres Cathedral the capital name is "French." Let us here, therefore, call him Lord French, as in common parlance most still do. The last 20 years of his life were lived so much in the limelight, and have been documented so fully by himself or others, that one cannot expect many revelations about them in a biography, even when written by a son with every access to his father's papers. The earlier phases of the War had already been treated by Lord French himself in his book "1914," which included his version of the "shells" episode. Loos and Lord French's supersession were not touched, it is true, in that volume. But Major French is probably right in holding that the reason why his father was superseded must be sought, not in Haig's protest against his handling of the reserves at Loos, but in the resentment felt by Kitchener, Asquith and other "people of importance" against his irregular action over the munitions crisis. Where his biography is useful, is that by its many excerpts from his father's diary it corroborates these latest antagonisms—shows Kitchener recurrently hostile to French almost from the start; shows French from a very early stage increasingly concerned about munitions and unable to get any satisfaction about them out of Kitchener; and bears out his claim that the course which he took in May, 1915, however reprehensible in ordinary circumstances, was taken from honest and indeed self-sacrificing motives, with the knowledge that it must cost him his command.

Was French a great commander? In certain spheres he unquestionably was. Given the old type of mobile campaign fought with limited forces, and the old type of panoramic battle planned and executed by a general who could see all the moves himself, French was an almost perfect tactician and no mean strategist either. His career as a cavalry commander in South Africa was extremely brilliant and practically faultless; within the limits of his opportunities it could scarcely have been excelled. One cannot forbear speculating how much sooner the War there might have ended had he and not Kitchener succeeded Lord Roberts in the chief command. There are traces of their antagonism even then. When Kitchener made the disastrous blunder of attacking Cronje at Paardeberg, not only was his failure thrown into relief by the brilliance of French's success immediately preceding it, but he had acted directly against French's advice. French never got much scope from Kitchener after Roberts went home; and there is a curious story how, when Kitchener and French drove together through London on their triumphal return, Kitchener in the whole course of the drive only "grunted" a single word.

Major French supplies an excellent account of his father's South African achievements, and brings out clearly the qualities which went to make them—perfect nerve, strong self-reliance and initiative, and the capacity to form very quick decisions without blundering. Though he had not been through the Staff College, he was no mere empiricist; his military reading and study were extensive. Nor was any contemporary officer in the British Army more keen on training men in peace time. Unquestionably he did an immense deal between 1902 and 1914 to raise British military standards in this respect. Thus when the War broke out, his appointment to command the B.E.F. was made, as his son quite truly says, with national unanimity. Neither in the Army nor outside it was there anyone with a rival nominee. Had it been he, instead of Grierson, who dropped dead before the first battle, few military leaders would have stood before history with a more unchallenged glory.

And now? Well, there are certainly two schools of opinion. That the British regular soldier fought and marched magnificently in the retreat and advance all the way from Mons to the Aisne, is undeniable. That he was as well led as he might have been, is not. Of course French had at first a terribly hard task—an exposed position, overwhelming enemy odds, a defeated and unreliable Ally. There were additions of sheer bad luck in it; Lanrezac was a most unfortunate person to have commanding the adjoining French army; and Smith-Dorrien was an unfortunate subordinate—had French had instead Lord Plumer, whom he had asked for, many things might have happened differently. Still, it is not easy to see, as it was, any remarkable brilliancy of command—certainly nothing to justify his son's phrase: "by far the greatest performance of his long career." French himself showed a true instinct when he took his title from Ypres.

In regard to First Ypres he deserves a double credit. First, for barring against overwhelming odds the German drive towards the Channel ports. Here he showed to more advantage than at any other time in 1914-15, because the battle was on lines which enabled him to be in personal contact with almost every major operation in it. He could actually see what was happening with his own eyes, and meet the main emergencies with strokes of his own devising. Such gifts as his remarkable power of military oratory (shared with so many of the greatest old-style commanders from Cæsar to Napoleon) were brought into full play in actually rallying, reviving, and energising individual battalions. Hence he made men almost literally do the impossible, to a degree in which few leaders ever have. But secondly, as is too often forgotten, and as his son quite properly brings out, it was solely due to French that the British were at Ypres at all. Their place in the line was on the Aisne. It was on French's initiative that they were taken out of it to form the nucleus of the defence of the Channel ports. But for that the ports would have been lost; since the French Government did not then (nor at any time) realise the vital need for saving them half as thoroughly as we did.

No outstanding interest attaches to French's later activities, in the Home Command or the Irish Viceroyalty. On the other hand, his early days, as revealed in the biography, make extremely good reading. It is not always remembered that, like Evelyn Wood, he began in the Navy, which he did not leave till he was 18. Of his life till then, and later till he entered the Regular Army, he wrote shortly before his death an account which is here printed. It is perhaps the raciest thing in the book, and altogether charming. Another striking fact in his pre-South African career is that in 1895 he was very nearly retired from the Army—he had been on half-pay since 1893, and the fixed period was within a few months of expiring. By such accidents is history ruled!

Major French has on the whole done his duty as a biographer well. He has kept the different phases and periods in good proportion; and the result is readable and not overloaded. There are a few crudities (the poem on p. 236 was not worth printing); and there are too many instances (a bad one on p. 228) where a quotation is made from an unnamed authority. And a few needless mistakes, such as "Spiers" on p. 209, where Captain (now General) Spears is meant.

THE GREAT MAN

Lord Beaverbrook: An Authentic Biography. By F. A. MACKENZIE. Jarrolds. 18s.

One of the recognised signs of a Great Man is that things not in themselves especially valuable or interesting gain value and interest merely by their association with Greatness. Thus a casual note from the hand of Goethe, a doubtful comma in a line of Shakespeare, a light vulgarity dropped from the lips of Napoleon, become by their association matters of anxious research and voluminous comment. I admit that I had not hitherto realised that Lord Beaverbrook was now to be ranked with these immortals. I knew, of course, that he came into the world with comparatively little, that he made some millions from business transactions in Canada, that he has become the proprietor and inspirer of several widely circulated newspapers, and that he is also what is known as a "dynamic force" in politics. Of Lord Beaverbrook's immense political influence no one could be ignorant—he has himself told us of it in several modest volumes, whose contents are drawn upon in this biography. He has apparently been the unassuming controller of events from behind the scenes, ever since his meteoric appearance in English politics. But Mr. Mackenzie tells us a great deal more than this. We are given portraits of Lord Beaverbrook at various ages; accounts of his early precocity and his schooldays in Canada (his schoolmaster, as one might expect, has since described him "as a born leader of men from the day he left his cradle," and he is himself reported as saying that as "a boy, I knew the value in exchange of every marble in the village"). We are told of his religious upbringing (certainly the Covenanting strain breaks forth in each of his utterances); we are given a rapid description of his immensely successful handling of the cement and of innumerable other industries in Canada (here the information would have gained in interest by even fuller treatment, in spite of Mr. Mackenzie's

satisfactory assurance that there is no justification in fact for any of the rumours of this period to Lord Beaverbrook's detriment): we have a full account of his activities during the War, of his conflict with Mr. Baldwin, and of the apparently overwhelming success of the Empire Crusade. The book, which contains many quotations from Lord Beaverbrook's speeches—some of them might have seemed commonplace, coming from a common person—ends with appendices devoted to his utterances upon Empire Free Trade. One wishes that in order to prove more completely the unanswerable nature of his case, Sir William Beveridge's answer to Lord Beaverbrook's B.B.C. oration had been printed side by side with it.

Perhaps I am not properly sensitive to greatness. I confess that some of the details seem to me to lack significance. When we reach the marriage of Lord Beaverbrook we are, for instance, given a lengthy quotation from the *Halifax Morning Chronicle* of 1906, explaining that:

> It was a very quiet wedding, only 45 invitations having been issued. At the Garrison Chapel the bride wore a going-away gown of hunters' green and green chiffon hat, and carried a bouquet of white roses. She was attended. . . . The groomsman was. . . . The ushers were. . . . The ceremony was performed. . . . Mrs. Aitken . . . were among those present. The wedding was followed by a reception, after which Mr. and Mrs. Aitken left for the wedding trip, which will extend over three months and will include visits to Cuba and Mexico and the Continent of Europe. The young couple were the recipients of many wedding gifts, including one of Maltese lace from Major-General Sir Charles and Lady Parsons.

The book contains many parallel passages, but the proofs were apparently inadequately read. A number of corrigenda and addenda are therefore inserted in the front page. For example:

> Page 117, *add at end*: "He had already in the summer of 1916 been made a baronet."
>
> Page 164, lines 5, 6: *For* "40 per cent." *read* "handsome dividends."
>
> Page 236, line 5: *For* "Mr. William" *read* "the Hon. Max."

Coming at the beginning of the book, as they do, these corrections and additions very successfully set the tone and intention of this remarkable (but almost unreadable) biography.

KINGSLEY MARTIN.

"A LIVE WIRE"

Half Way, An Autobiography. By CECIL ROBERTS. Hutchinson. 10s. 6d.

If this is half way, what will the complete course be like? It will fling a girdle round the world. It will reduplicate the equator. It will be a recurring decimal of "those damned little dots," and each dot a diamond. It will be a sparkling circus without a pay-box, a scintillating carnival with never a Lent. Here is a man who looking back only from the middle of life's bridge can tell of far more amazing events than I who have nearly reached the farther bank, and I too have not been idle.

When he came to us in France as a correspondent near the end of the War, and poured himself out to me as we drove to various points of the Front, I sometimes said to myself, "Is this the most imaginative of fictionists, or only the most fortunate of men?" That is over twelve years ago now, but even then he appeared to have known everyone, seen everything, and suffered all one can this side of immortality. And now he has only gone on adding to all he told me then. I recognise the imaginative man still. His imagination is revealing, idealising. For instance, writing of us war correspondents, he calls me "grim, with surly eyes." I did not know that myself. It had never occurred to me. It is a revelation, and I heartily welcome it. He says I bore a number of decorations on my breast. At that time I bore only two—the South African. But his radiant mind idealised the two into a galaxy. How enviable a gift, and what a delightful companion! He is always at the top of his bent, always alert, always a "live wire," and all his swans are angels—grim angels some of them!

In the War he seems to have been appointed to something in the munitions, the air service, and the submarine-destroyers, and when he finally reached us during the last phases of the advance out of France into Belgium and Germany, one might have supposed he would have thought it all rather dull, for by that time the dangers were of no great account. Not at all! I never knew a man more happily excited than Roberts was under a random shell fire at Maubeuge. And it was the same all the way. He seemed to exist in an imaginative ecstasy of life. Yet his account of the gradual advance from Lille to the great bridge at Cologne is entirely accurate. I know, for I was with him nearly all the time, and somehow he discovered far more than I did about the final days of the unhappy Kaiser at Spa.

Apart from the War, he was everything by turns and nothing long, and every change was splendid. Civil service (too safe), mastership (too monotonous), journalism (too narrowing), lecturing in United States (too much hospitality), wandering in Texas (rather arid), living Byronic in Venice (much better), coasting the Mediterranean (better still), returning to London (best of all), departing again (better still)—so the inspiriting story goes on, and we pant and toil after him in vain. Of course, one needs money, too. "I am not a mercenary man," he remarks, and he cannot be, but he rightly adds:

> There are some things more important than money—but not many. And there is nothing more important when one is entirely without it. . . . Nothing can be more dishonest than the prevalent cant taught to the young about the unimportance of money.

What with journalism, editing, lecturing, the present of an estate in the Southern States, and novel-writing, he seems always to have made enough for freedom and for generosity. The book abounds in sayings and stories gathered from this full and lively existence. I could quote a column, such as:

> It is flying in the face of facts to talk about honourable traditions of warfare.
>
> There is certainly little to hope from the creeds. Amid the international dementia of those war days nothing was quite so ludicrous as organised religion.
>
> The very perfection of his sentences (Mr. Asquith's) and the fulfilled sequences of his thought defeated his object, if it was to stir his audience.

I like the Americanism:

> At Iowa University I pass a Greek temple adjoining the campus, called "The Pantorium." What is it? I ask. "Oh—that's dedicated to pressing the students' pants!"

And for summary of the author himself, what could be better than a note in a San Antonio paper:

> This keen young savant fairly sparkles with wit and humour. When talking he interpolates into highly involved economic topics many side-splitting anecdotes. His repartee comes as a shot from a rifle, or rather a volley from machine-guns. . . . His serious topics are treated with calm dignity. His stories are facetious bombshells. His diction is a thing of beauty.

H. W. N.

COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENCE

The Tragic Queen. A Study of Mary Queen of Scots. By ANDREW DAKERS. Hutchinson. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Dakers, in this study of Mary from her arrival in Scotland as the widow of Francis to her death, sets up as her latest defending counsel. On the controversial matters he is not judge but theorist, and plausibility is the utmost he can aim at. He brings no new documents to the evidence, but the old tangle of intrigue, rumour, plot and treachery still lends itself to a variety of sortings. Germany has handled it repeatedly; Lang, anxious to believe the Casket letters a forgery, was forced reluctantly, by close examination, to declare them genuine. Mr. Dakers has suffered no such misfortune. He has implicit trust in Mary's innocence, and his arguments consistently bear out his trust. This is not to suggest deliberate selection. On the face of it he appears unbiased and business-like in examination. His book is free from any gushing praises, bids for pity, and the emotional claptrap of the popular pleader. It is full of facts, reasoning and discussion, even to the point of losing Mary's personality in the multiplicity of confused motive that surrounds her.

Yet Mr. Dakers is a sentimentalist. Unconsciously it may be, his desire to acquit Mary has led up to the particular trend his arguments take. They are not always convincing, though no documentary facts may counter them. To Mr. Dakers innocence is all; it is of no matter to him that in clearing Mary's character he leaves her characterless. She becomes, at all the crucial moments, a blend of sweet negativity and thickheadedness. In his view she was ignorant of the murder plot, unaware of Bothwell's part in it, was not in love with Bothwell, and suspected nothing when she married him. Now it is true that Bothwell was acquitted, that a "marriage bond" attesting his innocence and recommending him as a husband for Mary was signed by the Scottish Lords. Mr. Dakers sees no reason why the Queen should not have believed implicity in this document. Yet, on his admission, "she knew an association of nobles had desired to rid her of Darnley . . . and her probable conclusion was that the deed had been a concerted one." Further, they obtained from

her through Bothwell a document *pardoning* them and relieving them of responsibility for any possible consequences of their signing the marriage bond. That is, they exonerated Bothwell and then hedged. If Mary, schooled and practised in this court of intrigue, could not put two and two together or smell a rat, she must have been, not merely an ineffectual angel, but a blind and foolish dupe.

Consistently with Mr. Dakers' attitude, the Casket letters must be forgeries. He upholds the suggestion of an original Glasgow letter incorporated in a forged document. Of the new conclusions he claims to put forward, one concerns the admittedly strange course of sending Elizabeth a Scottish translation. His contention is that the French "original" was to be written with more explicitness if Elizabeth failed to be convinced. Elizabeth did fail—on his own interpretation; there is no evidence that a stronger version was despatched. Secondly, comes the question of verbal similarities between the letter and Crawford's Deposition. Advocates of the forgery theory have tried to prove the letter to be copied from Crawford. Mr. Dakers believes Crawford has followed the forged letter. But why, if Crawford did base his declaration on the letter, should this rule out its genuineness? These are a few of the questions that indicate that Mr. Dakers has not proved his case. Nor has he made a living figure of Mary, for between the known facts and his reading of the uncertain ones she is all awry. If instead of a plaster saint he had admired Mary, he might not have washed out her personality with her sins.

ELIZABETHAN NEWS

A Second Elizabethan Journal (1595-1598). By G. B. HARRISON. Constable. 24s.

In the introduction to his first Elizabethan journal, published three years ago, of which this is a continuation, Dr. Harrison said that the book originated some years previously when he was preparing an edition of Will Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder*, and when the Peace delegates were busy and Mr. Charles Chaplin had just finished his triumphal progress in England. He was struck by the fact that Will Kemp had little place in the history of Elizabeth's reign and that Mr. Chaplin was likely to occupy as little in that of the present sovereign, and yet both, in their respective ages, were the objects of public attention and interest to a far greater extent than the politicians. *A Second Elizabethan Journal* has been composed on the same method as the first, that is, it purports to be a diary recording the gossip current in the ordinaries, taverns and playhouses of the time, and Dr. Harrison has again written in a style contemporary with the events he describes. He does this so naturally that it is impossible to find fault with the book on the grounds that its manner is pseudo-archaic. A good imitation of a Tudor house is probably as pleasant, at least to the eye, as a genuine one, providing there is no lapse of taste such as the placing of it in unsympathetic surroundings, and Dr. Harrison, throughout a long book, is guilty of no such lapse.

The subjects which interested the "man in the street" in the age of Elizabeth were very much the same as those which fill our newspapers to-day, and in order to understand the state of affairs then, it is necessary to imagine a complete absence of such sources of information. Perhaps the lack of newspapers had something to do with the rather high degree of intelligence and culture attained, it would seem from Dr. Harrison's pages, by the ordinary man; modern journalism, besides the other sins commonly ascribed to it, may well be in part responsible for the decay of the art of conversation, in which curiosity is always a stimulating element. However that may be, Dr. Harrison's imaginary diarist records new books and plays with an obviously intimate knowledge and a wide interest. Here is one entry:

> Mr. Norden hath written a godly book entitled *The Mirror of Honour*, dedicated to the Earl of Essex; wherein every professor of arms, from the general, chieftains and high commanders to the private officer and inferior soldier, may see the necessity of the fear of God, and the use of all divine virtues, both in commanding and obeying, practising and proceeding in the most honourable affairs of war; a treatise most necessary, comfortable and expedient for all English subjects, whereby their duties to God, their Prince and their country, their assurance and safety, is lively set forth as in a glass before them.
>
> Noteth the wicked assertion of a military man who affirmed that it is enough for the ministry to be masters of sin, and that it beseemeth soldiers to live like soldiers, to swear like soldiers, and to sin like soldiers.

That military man, it may be noted, is not defunct yet, and it is surprising how throughout the book it may be seen that the English character has changed hardly at all in three hundred years.

It would be a mistake to give the impression that the gossip recorded in the journal is predominantly literary. Ralegh, Drake, Hawkins, the Earl of Essex, Lord Burleigh and the Queen herself appear in its pages, as well as Drayton, Sidney, Chapman and Shakespeare, and the doings of the Army and the Fleet are commented on as well as the newest book from the press or the latest production at the Rose. Royalty, indeed, was as much discussed as it is to-day, and Elizabeth's moods, policy and health are rightly made to figure prominently in the journal. Less noble topics are also abundantly recorded in the diary, and Dr. Harrison shows that his learning is equalled by his knowledge of human nature; there is much talk of crime, and of other perennial subjects of discussion like excessive prices, censorship, and superfluous alehouses. Sermons have their fair share of the public attention:

> To-day Mr. Stephen Gosson, parson of Great Wigborough in Essex, preached at Paul's Cross from 2 Chronicles, chap. xx., verse 20, on the action of war. War, said he, was just in reason, in religion and in practice of the Church, and man himself provided for it by reason and hands instead of the horns, hoofs, teeth and talons given to brute beasts. . . .

Dr. Harrison, throughout the journal, has demonstrated as great a sense of "news value" as did the Rev. Mr. Gosson, and his book is always absorbing and entertaining; it is also invaluable in providing a background to the literature of the period, and Shakespearean parallels are conveniently recorded in the notes. Dr. Harrison succeeds as no other historian and no novelist, in making real to the reader an age whose heroic and legendary qualities are but too apt to obscure its merits no less than its faults.

POLAND'S VICTORY

The Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World. By VISCOUNT D'ABERNON. Hodder and Stoughton. 10s. 6d.

This is a book of deep interest for two reasons. In the first place, the story that Lord D'Abernon tells is as exciting as a first-class romance. The Battle of Warsaw in 1920, when Marshal Pilsudski won a seemingly impossible victory over the Soviet Army, is called the Eighteenth Decisive Battle of the World because, in the author's opinion, it was

> a battle not less decisive than Sedan and the Marne in its influence on the culture of the world, on its science, religion, and political development. . . . The victory of Charles Martel has been termed one of those signal deliverances which affect for centuries the happiness of mankind. The Polish victory of 1920 has an equal, in some ways, perhaps, a superior, title to honour. For the civilisation endangered was of a higher order; compared with it, the

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century of Charles Martel was barbarous. In 1920 the set-back entailed by defeat would have been incomparably graver. While the hosts of Abd-er-Rahman were inspired by fierce religious zeal, they had an ordered state and enjoyed a high degree of culture. The enemies of the Poles had no ambition but to set class against class, no creed but destruction of the existent order, no policy but to annihilate all that stands for our conception of religion, justice and good faith.

When a writer of Lord D'Abernon's power and sincerity describes events that seem to him so important as this, and of which he was an eye-witness, the result is bound to be an exciting tale. The military events are pictured with clarity and dramatic force; the important figures in the story, such as Marshal Pilsudski and General Weygand, the French military adviser, are characterised with vigour.

There is a more important reason than mere readability, however, for the interest of this book. All the assumptions on which Lord D'Abernon bases his view of history are provocative, and, it is to be hoped, mistaken. For if civilisations are really won or lost on battlefields, then there is no excuse for pacifism. Lord D'Abernon writes, "Had Pilsudski and Weygand failed to arrest the triumphant advance of the Soviet Army at the Battle of Warsaw, not only would Christianity have experienced a disastrous reverse, but the very existence of Western civilisation would have been imperilled." And yet a large part of the book is devoted to showing that if the Russian Commander had not blundered, Pilsudski and Weygand must certainly have failed to arrest his triumphant advance. Is it possible that Western civilisation is really so frail a plant? That the powers of the Soviet can prevail so readily against the Christian Church? Or are such mighty issues as the life and death of a civilisation determined inconspicuously, during generations of time, so that no single act of violence can influence them? If this latter view be held, then pacifism is a tenable creed. If military crises are irrelevant to the main course of history, then mankind may hope to outgrow militarism. But whoever agrees with Lord D'Abernon and the theory of "Decisive Battles" will very properly feel it an obligation and a privilege to defend his cause upon the fields of Poland, or wherever the challenge may arise.

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SHORTER NOTICES

Cooking Through the Centuries. By J. R. AINSWORTH-DAVIS. Dent. 6s.

The English Mediæval Feast. By W. E. MEAD. Allen and Unwin. 15s.

Herb bennet, betony, dittany, snake-weed, borage and bugloss: with such our ancestors flavoured their salted meats in the fifteenth century. In Saxon and Norman times the trenchers were of bread and were afterwards, when well soaked with gravy, given as alms. The prehistoric man gorged on oysters and cracked his elk bone for the marrow. An eighteenth-century traveller to Jamaica found "the chief fudling they make in the island is Rumbullion, *alias*, killdevil, and this is made of suggar-canes distilled, a hott, hellish and terrible liquor." In the sixteenth century it was considered that "musical-headed Frenchmen" made the best chefs, but for confectionery "the sweet hand of the seafaring Portingale" was sought. The manufacture of beet sugar was started by Napoleon when, in 1799, Britain held up the cane sugar imports of her colonies. Many countries have vast industries in fruits and vegetables, whose seeds were originally imported from opposite ends of the globe. The amount of alcohol in ginger beer. . . . But, enough! Whether gourmet, historian or casual reader, he who spends his money on Mr. Davis's book will obtain information and amusement far greater than six shillings will usually provide. It is racily written and very complete, considering the ground it covers (the fish course has suffered most from the constriction). Mr. Mead's book is a magnifying glass applied to a chapter of Mr. Davis's work. He has, by pain of immense research, collected the details of feast after feast of the Mediævals and presents them in accessible form. The great feasts of to-day compare very unfavourably with their mediæval counterparts, of a time when feasting and "fudling" constituted almost the only indoor pastimes.

British Banks and the Finance of Industry. By S. EVELYN THOMAS. King. 12s. 6d.

Mr. Thomas, who has written a number of books on banking problems, attempts in this one to play the part of the bankers' critical friend. He is discontented with the working of our financial system under post-war conditions, but believes that matters can be put right without radical changes, and chiefly by the bankers themselves. He wants the joint stock banks to pay far more attention to economic research, to strengthen the personnel and powers of their industrial departments, to seek representation in certain cases on the directorates of their industrial customers, to take a more active part in guiding their depositors' savings into suitable home investment, and generally to modify their traditional policy of "safety first" in favour of a more energetic attempt to help and stimulate production. He would, moreover, have the Bank of England pursue a less cautious policy in its control of the volume of credit, in order to stimulate production without raising prices. If these things are not done, he doubts if Great Britain can successfully bear the burden of present costs of production; and, even if they are done, he believes other measures to be necessary in order to bring costs down. He thinks many wages too high, but despairs of their reduction, and turns accordingly to a demand for stronger action to reduce middlemen's costs and profits and so bring down retail prices. Mr. Thomas has nothing very original to say on any of these matters; but he has produced a competent compilation of ideas and projects that are in favour with those who want the City to reform itself, for fear of nationalisation if it fails.

The Mysterious Madame: a Life of Madame Blavatsky. By "EPHESIAN" (C. E. BECHHOFER ROBERTS). Lane. 7s. 6d.

"We think," concluded the S.P.R. committee who investigated the Adyar phenomena in 1885, "that she [Madame Blavatsky] has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious and interesting impostors in history." They were too hopeful. There have been since plenty of fakes technically more subtle than H. P. B.'s, and, as impostors go, she was not strikingly interesting. Still, she had a certain dingy picturesqueness, a rude gift of phrase, and marked ingenuity in wriggling out of tight corners. This compact study of her life—or as much of it as can really be traced—is readable, but lacks subtlety. "Ephesian" does not convey any adequate idea of what H. P. B.'s doctrine purported to be; nor does he take us far enough into the arcana of the Theosophical Society to let us appreciate her standing, then or now, in the movement. And the psychology of whole-time impostors is complex: who is duped first, dupe or duper? "Ephesian" leaves us uncertain of what, if anything, Madame Blavatsky believed; and even although it may have been moonshine, we must be able to gauge her belief if we are to appreciate her hold on the queer circle of her followers.

Spain As It Is. By HELEN CAMERON GORDON, F.R.G.S. Methuen. 12s. 6d.

This book is not, as the title might suggest, an account of the political or social condition of Spain. It is in fact a series of chats on different places that the author has visited up and down the country—from Santiago to Alicante, from the Balearics to Seville—and a good deal of it consists of stories of Spain as it was in past centuries. Happily, Mrs. Cameron has very little to say about politics, or the result would have been heat rather than light. So, at least, we judge from a passage where she is extolling the good work done by King Alfonso in assisting Allied prisoners during the war, and in "often actually extricating its

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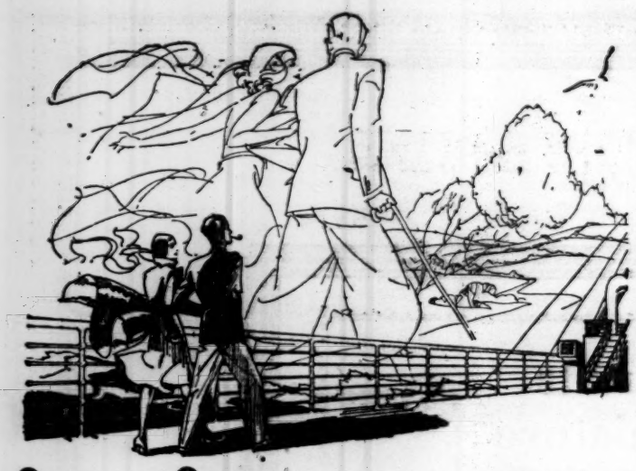

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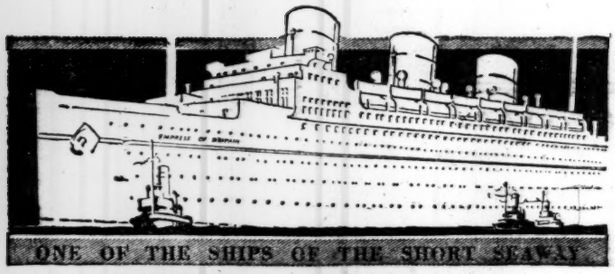

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prey from the claws of the Prussian beast wallowing in its bath of Belgian blood and tears." The tourist will find the book an agreeable and easily read supplement to his Baedeker or Blue Guide.

The Drama in English. By W. P. EATON. Scribner's. 7s. 6d.

Presumably the forerunner of this book was a series of lectures to students of the stage (Mr. Eaton is lecturer in an American school of drama). It envisages the development of the theatre in England and the United States not merely as literature, stagecraft, histrionics, etc., but as a creative and recreative social institution in the making of which the audiences and, through them, the times have a share. To tackle this brief history by taking typical plays of each period or movement and analysing them *with*, not for, the reader is a device which, if not entirely original, is most felicitously applied here. "It is a common mistake to judge old plays by their present effectiveness and still more by their interest as printed literature," the author warns us early in the book. He illustrates the response of differing audiences to changing techniques of presentation by apt reference to the difficulty which a present day adult, unaccustomed to film-going, might encounter in following scene-sequence, whereas a juvenile "film-fan" easily follows the plot. Interest in this book to the English reader will attach to the author's comparative studies of the American theatre from the time of the Civil War to O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*. There is a full and well-ordered bibliography.

Spreading Germs of Hate. By G. S. VIERECK. Duckworth. 12s. 6d.

In this book Mr. Viereck gives an account of the propagandist activities carried on by both England and Germany in the United States, followed by America's efforts after her entry into war. He has performed the difficult task of stepping out of his own shoes to write an impartial narrative with the object of condemning propaganda. To this end he describes the methods, incidents and effects of this paper war with the thoroughness of one behind the scenes. In his pages, G. S. Viereck, editor of the pro-German newspaper, *The Fatherland*, and member of the German "Propaganda Cabinet," appears in the third person. How far the greater success of Allied than of German activity influenced America's ultimate decision is a question Mr. Viereck does not tackle, but he finds his own organisation clumsier than the British, besides which it suffered two major disasters in its apparent connection with the sinking of the *Lusitania* and in the loss of a portfolio filled with incriminating documents. Mr. Viereck has certainly succeeded in showing up the strength and insidiousness of propaganda in a time of war fever.

The Erl King. By EDWIN GRANBERRY. Constable. 7s. 6d.

It is always questionable whether a story gains from being associated, more or less openly, with a legend which has been expressed once and for all. Mr. Granberry, who makes great play of transporting the Erl King to the coast of Florida, does, undoubtedly, gain certain effects. Whether they are legitimate, whether they do not ultimately cheapen the rest of his novel, is not so certain. His book is difficult to class; the more so, as he belongs to that irritating school of novelists who, having brooded over a subject in their own mind until its ramifications are clear to them, forget that the reader has not been through a similar process.

Modern Continental Playwrights. By F. W. CHANDLER. Harpers. 15s.

As a record of the most important dramatists since Ibsen, this book will have a certain value to students of the drama. Mr. Chandler unfortunately shows no critical capacity, and it would be impossible to discover from his pages how Wedekind differed from Pirandello or Shaw from Sierra. One has to accept the fact that men apparently quite devoid of æsthetic taste like to write about literature, rather in the same spirit that other men will discuss Spode or sport.

On the Frontier and Beyond. By Lieut.-Colonel SIR FREDERICK O'CONNOR, C.S.I., C.I.E., C.V.O. Murray. 15s.

In the course of his thirty years' service in the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India, Sir Frederick O'Connor has travelled widely and held a number of important posts. He relates his experiences with a vigorous directness which makes them always good reading. His years in Persia (1900-1916) were perhaps the most adventurous, but general interest even to-day is more likely to centre in the Tibetan experience, when, as he says, he found himself set down in the midst of an almost entirely unknown but highly organised civilisation all but purely indigenous. He got on well with the people, and can still write of them freshly and with sympathy. In every country his recreation has been the killing of game, the bigger the better, and he devotes a separate chapter to the subject, with special reference to tiger-shooting in Nepal.

Scottish Place-Names. By W. C. MACKENZIE. Kegan Paul. 15s.

Readers who have not "got the Gaelic" will find Mr. Mackenzie's book bewildering but entrancing. He deals in words that are spelt one way, pronounced another, and unpronounceable at that—and for whose meaning we must take his word. Those who have got the Gaelic will, no doubt, often disagree with him. For it is a ticklish and uncertain business, this tracing one's way back from words corrupted by common (and ignorant) usage to the distant origin that gives them a meaning. How many have looked for eagles at Gleneagles, when they

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EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE

should have sought a ruined church? And who that visits Schiehallion knows it for a "hazel-tree fairy-hill"? Mr. Mackenzie says the early Gaels and Norsemen and the rest who made the names of Scotland were prosaic folk, who saw no romance in their country. Their hills were "Sheep" hill, "Cattle" hill, "Horse" hill, according to their uses; or rough hill, rocky hill, "hill like a barn." But they had also Tom a' Gruagaich, the brownies' hill. And descriptive names at least tell the truth, as romance seldom does. They had a word for every type of valley, for where water flows out to the sea, and where the sea flows in to the land, for still water and tumbling water, for narrow waters and broad waters, for a mountain stream and a mountain torrent. Our ancestors were perhaps prosaic, they were also very observant, and knew the face of their country far better than we do.

About Motoring

THE M.G. CARS

FIVE M.G. Midgets occupied the first five places in the Double Twelve Hours Race at Brooklands a week ago, easily defeating some fifty racing cars of various nationalities, handled by picked drivers, including most of the British champions. So sweeping a victory suggests a blunder by the handicapper, since time allowances are essential when a Big Six Bentley races against an Austin Seven. But in this case it is perverse to blame the handicapper, and it is just to praise the M.G. engineers. The handicapper is an expert with detailed inside knowledge of all that any car has ever done. The entered cars are compelled to do their preliminary tests on Brooklands track, where his hawk eye and his infallible electric timing register all that happens. The alert eyes and ears of every rival act as unofficial—if somewhat malicious—spies. It is quite extraordinarily difficult to steal a march on the Brooklands handicapper. In fact, it can only be done by achieving the miraculous; and this the M.G. has done. I might present the facts in another way. If a millionaire had come to me three years ago, waved his cheque book, and asked me to produce a car to surpass the Rolls, I should jump at the chance; and so would any other engineer. The Rolls is perfection: but when money does not count, one may dream of gilding perfection. If on the other hand, the millionaire had engaged me to outclass the Austin Seven, I should unquestionably have refused. The Austin Seven is one of the seven wonders of the modern world. It is built down to a size and down to a price. Some of the most astute brains in the industry have been busy on it for many a long year. I should have replied to my millionaire, "Sir, you demand the impossible!" Yet the M.G. has tackled and achieved the impossible; and—oddest of all—it has succeeded in a casual and almost accidental fashion.

Sir William Morris in his younger days—when undergraduates probably addressed him condescendingly as "Bill"—used to run a cycle and motor-cycle agency at Oxford. He found it remunerative, and when he began to build good cars for the million, he kept on the old business, now considerably inflated, under the title of Morris Garages. Sir William never believed in racing; it struck him as an expensive form of advertising, and he considered that a manufacturer should put ginger into his engines by other means. But a certain Cecil Kimber tuned up a standard Morris car into a really fierce projectile. Envious undergraduates yearned for duplicates of the Kimber car, and were angrily shooed away from the Morris works. But what Morris Motors would not do, Morris Garages might do. So supertuned M.G. cars, constructed mostly from Standard Morris parts, began to appear in small numbers, and gratified owners considered them extremely fragrant. Anon a special factory was required to deal with the demand; and still the demand swelled. So the final scene was set when a fine new factory was laid out at Abingdon for the production of M.G. cars, and they ceased to be mere hotted editions of the standard Morris, and blossomed out as special designs constructed of distinctive material and distinctive parts. The staff included—for Sir William is a fine judge of men—an engineer who knew the ultimate secrets of speed, and an artist who could not draw an ugly body if he tried. Originally all the engines were four cylinders, like their Morris cousins of the same vintage. Then the six cylinder came along; and anon Mr. Kimber noticed with interest and rage that a great many dashing but impecunious individuals bought miniature sporting fours instead of buying the rather larger M.G. The Austin Seven sold freely to such buyers in its various sporting camouflages. Numerous small French cars of the provocative type were being imported into this country—the Amilcar, the Salmson, and a few others. So the staff got busy, and produced the first M.G. Midget. It was not fantastically fast, but it had the most entrancing lines, and held the road amazingly well for a small car. Poverty-stricken sportsmen fell for it in heaps. Kimber recognised that beauty alone could not insure growing sales of a sporting car; and that some more horses and some more knots must be excavated somehow. So the engineering side of the Abingdon works got busy on the chassis, and to-day it is definitely the fastest thing of its size on wheels; and all the comparatively elderly cars in the same class are sweating and puzzling to catch it up. Saturday, May 9th, was the festival of its apotheosis. The Brooklands handicapper had not dreamt that it could be so fast. He was caught tripping for once, and the bigger cars entirely and ludicrously failed to live with it. Even the Talbots, which during the whole of last year's racing season registered spotless team nonstops in all their races, realised on the first day of the Double-Twelve that they had to accept defeat or bust. They decided for the first time in their present racing chapter to take a chance, and opened out rather too far; they did not bust in the literal sense, but they overdrove, and encountered trouble. It is probable that the M.G. will be handicapped out of the remainder of this season's composite events. Proud builders of £3,000 six cylinder cars are not going to spend money and risk lives and convulse their experimental departments in order to tail home behind a tiny car catalogued at a bagatelle. So we may not hear another fanfare sounded in honour of the M.G. for some time to come. And it is, therefore, just that its recent miracle should be trumpeted loudly.

I ought to add a note that the latest edition of the big M.G.—the 18-80 h.p.—is in its far more expensive manner a car of similar calibre, and worth the attention of any sportsman who likes a handsome car of considerable pace at a rational price. It is neither ostentatious nor ridiculously expensive; but it has a far better performance than many cars which flaunt both these common vices of the motor world. In particular it is an admirable car for Continental use, since it can streak very pleasantly over the monotonous flats of France, and climb the worst Alpine passes without showing even a wisp of steam at its radiator vent.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

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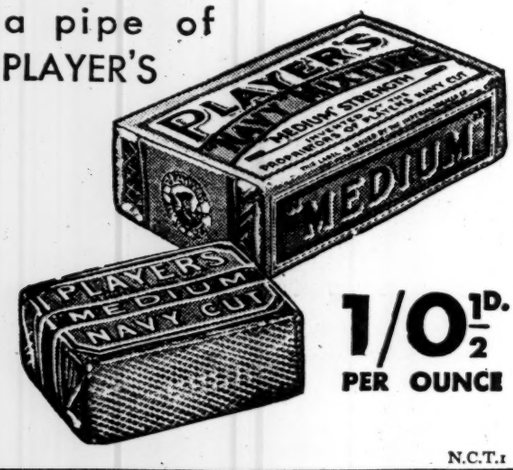

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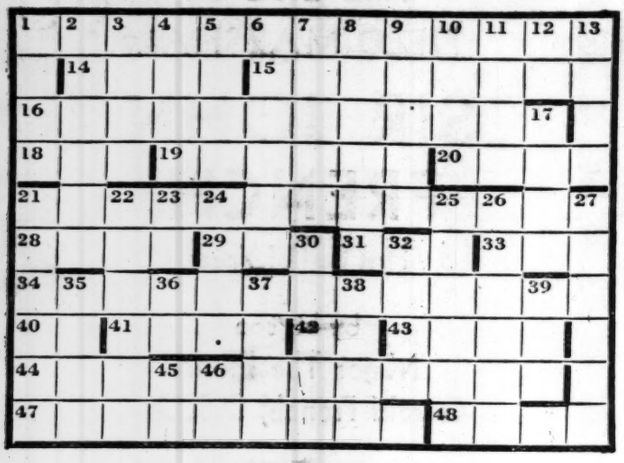
PLAYTIME

BY CALIBAN.

TRINCULO'S CROSSWORD



VANITY FAIR.

"*Come, children, let us put away the box and the puppets.*" *Put them in* 1, 16, 21, 34 *and* 44 *across.*

ACROSS.

14. An old Spanish ocean am I.
15. "Nosey Parker" might well be the cry.
18. Indication of time I supply.

19. Here's somebody's calling for me.
20. A course, that is crooked, at sea.
28. Now reddened your litmus shall be.

29. My plural was sung with the man.
31. I'm of somewhat indefinite span.
33. With my offspring, to pray you may plan.

40. For Kipling's harumfrodite seek.
41. Our me-shotten coast is unique.
42. Who invented the Bull-doggy clique?

43. Here's a boxer knocked clean off his nut.
47. Without us, your beer would go phut.
48. Reverse, and I'll but you a but.

DOWN.

1. Ben Jonson, as everyone knows.
2. Uncle Jonath: that's clear, I suppose?
3. When gyring, 'tis thither one goes.

4. This Horace besought us to seize.
5. Thus sting (so says rumour) the bees.
6. A cocktail that's certain to please.

7. Some assertion—a shellfish and I.
8. Little darling will flower, by and bye.
9. Add finely, and Venus you'll spy.

10. A pronoun, with gibus inside.
11. Mr. Shelley his birdhood denied.
12. An em now be pleased to divide.

13. A shock for the citizens, this.
17. What birds do—symbolic of bliss.
21. Where Austria once faced the abyss.

22. Just a name; 27 well stirred.
23. This is March 25—so I've heard.
24. To admire him were doubtless absurd.

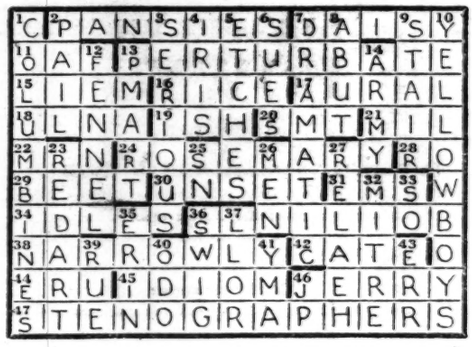
25. "Roll by"; there is shelter for you.
26. A cabin; disorderly, too.
27. Looks black—but it's pleasant to view.

30. With 42, "signals" regret.
32. The same one can easily get.
35. The Janeites say: very well met.

36. Mr. Rat, they've extracted your tooth.
37. Take over—that's easy, forsooth!
38. Young in spirit, if seldom a youth.

39. A byword for courage was I.
45. } Disentangle four letters, and try
46. } A roll, or a stripe, to supply.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD



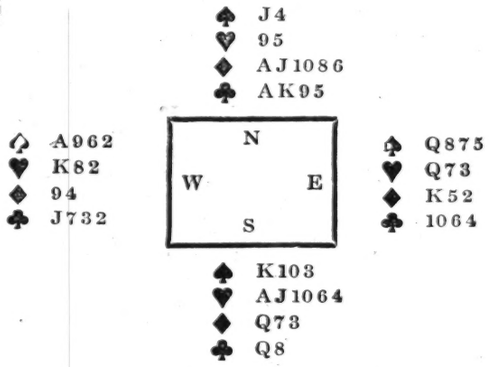
MINISTERING ANGEL.

BRIDGE

BY CALIBAN.

HOW TO BID AT CONTRACT: A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATIVE HANDS.

VIII. Suit Bid with Forcing Take-out.



Score: Game all. East deals.

The Bidding:

East	..	No Bid	No Bid	No Bid
South	..	1 ♥	3 N.T.	
West	..	No Bid	No Bid	
North	..	3 ♦	No Bid	

Notes on the Bidding:

As Mr. Culbertson has frequently emphasised, the backbone of the Forcing system is not the opening Two-bid (which I have not yet dealt with) but the Forcing Take-out. In the example shown, North, holding

(1) Three Honour-tricks

and (2) a "biddable" suit (he has in fact two such suits) responds to his partner's opening One-bid with a *forcing* bid of *Three* Diamonds. (If his best biddable suit were Spades, he would similarly bid *Two* Spades.) This bid shows his *three Honour-trick* minimum and, as the Americans say, "obligates" another bid from South.

South, with nothing new to show, makes a *minimum response* of Three No Trumps. As the cards lie, this is just good enough.

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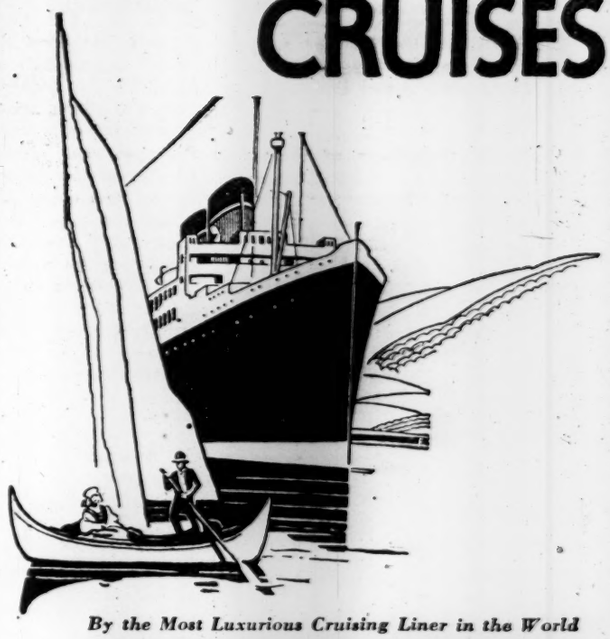

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

GLOOM IN THE CITY—HOW LONG THE SLUMP?—LET RUBBER SHAREHOLDERS AWAKE—AND RAILWAY STOCKHOLDERS

TO go into the City of a morning lately has been like descending to Stygian regions. In an atmosphere of inspissated gloom the Stock Exchange, in the guise of Charon, has been ferrying the ghosts of stocks and shares across the stream of selling orders. Sometimes these ghosts of security prices—horrible shadows of their former shapes and sizes—have crowded so thickly upon the shore that Charon has refused to offer his boat. Dealing, in other words, has been suspended from time to time in the more panic-stricken markets. It is all very well to blame the Stock Exchange, but if only a minority of the public persists in selling and not a soul has the courage to buy, prices must fall at a rate out of all proportion to the volume of selling. Nor can the jobbers take stock on their books indefinitely for their resources are strictly limited. Here are Wednesday's prices of a few representative securities which, in comparison with the highest prices ruling this year and last, indicate the deepness of the prevailing gloom:

	Highest prices. 1930.	1931.	Present price.	1930 Div. rate. %
Buenos Ayres Gt. Southern (Stock)	100¾	71¾	51½	6
Canadian Pacific ($25) ..	46¼	46¾	30	10*
Courtaulds (£1)	2⅞	1⅞	1¼	6 free
Dunlops (6/8)	15/4	13/–	6/7½	6
Imperial Chemical (£1) ..	29/–	18/6	12/6	6
P. & O. Steamship (£1 units)	53/–	37/–	23/3	10†
Pinchin Johnson (£1) ..	47/10½	38/–	21/6	22½
Turner & Newall (£1) ..	86/3	41/3	26/–	11¼†
Shell Transport (£1) ..	100/–	77/6	50/–	17½ free
Unilever (£1)	76/3	44/4½	32/6	10

*Quarterly dividends now reduced by half.

†Interim dividend this year reduced from 5% to 2½%.

The liquidation of a "deceased account" is always a plague in narrow markets, but when the living, whose confidence is dead, throw their shares on markets devoid of buyers, you see the result in the penultimate column of this table. One would like to hear the comments of the Governor of the Bank on Lancashire Cotton Corporation 6½ per cent. debentures, issued at 97½, selling at a discount of 13½.

* * *

There is, of course, no need or excuse for an investor's panic. The world trade slump is exceptionally severe and may exceed the normal cyclical period of two years, but it will surely pass. Slowly—very slowly—but inevitably, the necessary adjustment between costs and prices is going on in the business world. For example, Sir Eric Geddes, at the general meeting of the Dunlop Rubber shareholders last week, said that, eliminating all raw material costs, the progressive economies which had been made since 1924 in the Dunlop factories had taken £1,000,000 off the manufacturing costs alone of the 1930 output, while the costs of production on the company's rubber plantations had been reduced since 1929 from 5⅛d. per lb. f.o.b. to a little over 3d. this year. The lowering of the prices of manufactured goods unfortunately lags behind the fall in the prices of primary commodities. This always happens, for the producers of the primary commodities are unable immediately to correct over-production and are forced to throw surplus supplies on sensitive international markets. Witness the collapse in the prices of copper, tin, rubber, wheat and other primary products. But who can deny that the adjustment between raw material and retail prices is proceeding and that the slump is slowly working itself out? It is a lengthy process. The end of the boom came in the autumn of 1929. The collapse period lasted until the autumn of 1930, and the adjustment period may well extend into 1932. That is, a real recovery may not be seen before the spring or autumn of 1932. Investors are now beginning to realise that the 1931 results of trading and manufacturing companies will be much worse than those of 1930 and that 1930 dividends, even if cut, will be cut again next year. This is the painful thought which has been depressing both the London and the New York Stock Exchanges. But take heart, stockholders, for this is not the end of the capitalist world. Have confidence in your executives to make the adjustments required, or, if they do not deserve it, go to your company meetings and turn them out. That is a far better—and more social—thing to do than to turn your shares on the market.

* * *

Let us consider where stockholders may help to force their executives to "get on or get out." The rubber plantation industry is an obvious case. I will not say more about the Stevenson Restriction Scheme—to abuse it only leads to my receiving protests from injured investors—than that it delayed by at least five years the necessary reduction in production costs. Mr. J. W. F. Rowe, who has recently prepared a detailed study of the rubber industry for the London and Cambridge Economic Service, believes that before 1929 the native producers were on their way to becoming predominant. Their costs, while the European-owned estates were restricting output, were relatively low and their yields per acre relatively high. The slump in rubber prices, he says, has now reversed the position: it has forced economy and efficiency upon the European managements. Mr. Rowe believes that the European-owned estates are now at least ten years ahead of the native-owned, and have every prospect of eventual supremacy—if the inefficient producers are eliminated. The price of rubber has now improved from 2¾d. to 3⅛d. per lb., but even so it is only a matter of time before the small, high-cost estates are forced out of existence. Let the shareholders of these companies examine their balance sheets. If the cash holdings are small, they should tell their directors to give up the struggle and seek amalgamation with larger units on the best terms available. Some directors may want to tap "all out" in order to swell the aggregate receipts, but that is the suicide's policy. Others may seek merely to retain their fees as long as possible, knowing that their days are numbered (directors' fees and agents' charges add about ½d. per lb. to the cost of rubber produced on the small estates). These directors must be told by their shareholders at their meetings to go. No restriction scheme this time will be forthcoming to prolong their fees. Even such a staunch "restrictionist" as Mr. H. J. Welch, chairman of London Asiatic Rubber, has now confessed that with about half the world's rubber output in the hands of Asiatic small-holders, scattered over many countries, a satisfactory restriction scheme cannot be organised. Rubber shareholders must face these unpleasant facts. If they are dissatisfied with their directors I suggest that they should exchange their holdings for shares in the larger and better-managed rubber companies, especially as Mr. Rowe believes that a high rate of mortality among the high-cost producers in the next few months will bring temporarily high prices—perhaps even a temporary shortage of rubber—later on.

* * *

The home railway market is another case where shareholders should not idly watch the prices of their stocks crumbling to pieces. The renewed slump in home railway stocks at the beginning of this week was so alarming that some jobbers refused to make prices—a phenomenon which has not been seen since the "permanent way" was laid. The following table shows the extent of the slump:

	Highest. 1930.	1931.	Present price.	1930 div. %
London Midland & Scottish (ord.) ..	57½	34	18	2
London & North Eastern (pf. ord.) ..	39	17¾	9	¼
Great Western (ord.)	94	69½	50	5½
Southern (def. ord.)	33½	23⅜	15	1½

The cause of fresh selling this week was the statement of Sir Ralph Wedgwood before the Railway Rates Tribunal that the saving in railway wages from the recent award was about £4,000,000 while the decline in receipts of the four groups so far this year has been £5,750,000 as compared with the same period in 1930. At this rate dividends on the ordinary stocks must again be cut or passed altogether. Stockholders should, in my opinion, begin to press their directors and their Members of Parliament for the transfer of their undertakings to a National Transport Board established on the lines of the London Passenger Transport Board. It is satisfactory to see that the four groups have reached an agreement with the Minister of Transport to bring their suburban passenger traffic into the London Traffic pool. In the interests of London this plan is excellent; in the interests of the main line railways it is not sufficient. Only a National Transport Board, with powers to control public road transport, will enable the railways to obtain a commercial living and the country an efficient and co-ordinated traffic system.

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for APRIL—JUNE, 1931

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COMPANY MEETING

THE DUNLOP RUBBER COMPANY

DIFFICULT TRADING CONDITIONS
EFFECT OF THE WORLD DEPRESSION
SIR ERIC GEDDES' SURVEY

The ordinary general meeting of the Dunlop Rubber Company, Limited, was held on May 8th, in London.

The Right Hon. Sir Eric Geddes, G.C.B., G.B.E. (the chairman), in the course of his speech, said :—

Those of you who heard or read my speech at the last general meeting of shareholders will have realised that the causes which have brought about the result of last year's trading, and the possible effect of these causes, were then very present to the minds of your board.

Unfortunately, the events of the past year have given to the adverse factors the fullest possible weight. Here at home, high and ill-adjusted taxation and continued political uncertainty have maintained their adverse influence. Moreover, the unrest and disturbance in our export markets developed to a degree which your board, in spite of the most careful study, could not foresee. Indeed, I do not think that anyone, whether statesman, economist, or man of business, foresaw the full intensity of the depression, nor the suddenness with which the economic avalanche was to descend upon us in the latter part of the year.

This avalanche has resulted in unbalanced Budgets in many of the most important countries of the world. In our own country there has been a deficit of over £37,000,000. In America an adverse balance of over £160,000,000 is anticipated.

In Australia the year closed with a deficit of £13,000,000, and in Italy the first eight months showed a deficit of about £11,500,000, which is four times as great as the deficit at the corresponding date last year.

Causes which have so staggered Governments were bound to upset the calculations of commercial and industrial companies also, and it is not surprising that in almost every branch of business profits are being heavily reduced, and even turned into losses.

Our own company is, as you know, international, doing an unusually large proportion of its business overseas in every quarter of the globe. It was inevitable, therefore, that we should feel in full severity the force of the economic and political blizzard which has overwhelmed the world.

The most startling feature has perhaps been the unprecedented fall in the price of raw materials and foodstuffs. The most remarkable feature of the slump has been the extent to which it developed towards the end of 1930.

I have referred to political disturbances in various parts of the world, but there is one in particular which has affected our trade seriously and is still doing so. I refer to India, one of our most important overseas markets. Our business there in the first half of 1930 showed definite increases over 1929, but later the political disturbances in many parts of the country and the pronounced boycott of British goods so affected our business that by the end of the year our turnover showed a substantial drop as compared with 1929.

THE YEAR'S PROFIT.

The total profits from all sources for 1930, after providing for depreciation in the accounts of the whole group of companies, amounted to £1,250,963, as compared with £2,307,354. There has, therefore, been a decrease in profits of about 46 per cent. An interim dividend at the rate of 6 per cent., less income-tax, was paid upon the Ordinary shares, and in view of the falling off in the profits no further distribution to the Ordinary shareholders can be made.

For the first half of the year 1930 profits held up remarkably well, and in some directions were ahead of 1929. It was not until the last quarter of the year that the economic blizzard developed its full force, and it was the conditions during this period that upset our calculations. Nevertheless, the profits are substantial, and indicate what the company could have achieved had world conditions been normal.

The general economic conditions of 1930 I have already described. Their effect upon the affairs of your company has been that in the last three months of the year there was a heavy fall in sales, particularly in our Continental and overseas markets. For example, our overseas sales of motor covers from our home factories for the first six months of 1930 were nearly a high record for the past six years, but by the end of the year sales had so dropped that our total for the twelve months made a low record.

SLUMP AT END OF THE YEAR.

From almost a high record for six months to July we drop to a low record for the twelve-month period. The slump at the end of the year was the more remarkable as our past experience has been that in the export field the second half-year is generally better than the first half-year.

Other consequences of the economic depression were a heavy fall in foreign exchanges, particularly in South America, China, Australia, Spain and Persia, which directly involved your company in serious book losses, not all of which, I am glad to say, represent realised losses to date.

Similarly declining values made it incumbent on us to write down our inventory valuations for balance-sheet purposes, but this, again, does not altogether mean a realised loss.

Under the heading of Exchange and Inventories for the whole group of companies the total amount involved exceeds £600,000, but no part of this, so far as it does represent a loss, could have been prevented.

We have not been alone in feeling the effects of the storm that has raged over the industrial world in general, and the tyre and rubber industry in particular, and it may interest you to know that, taking the published figures of the twelve largest rubber companies in America, they show that whereas in 1929 profits totalled 37,196,000 dols., in 1930 the corresponding figure was a loss of 20,488,800 dols. These figures, I think, give a striking illustration of the effects of the unprecedented slump that has taken place during the year under review, a slump most severely felt in the export field, where we are, for better or worse, involved to a far greater extent than most competing tyre companies.

The balance-sheet position, I think you will agree, is a very strong one, as there is a surplus of current assets over current liabilities of £3,444,986, this surplus having increased during the year by £570,413.

FUTURE PROSPECTS.

With regard to future prospects, although, unfortunately, I cannot say, as I did last year, that the demand for our products throughout the world has never been so high, I can and do assert that our proportion of the available world business has never been so great as it is now. As soon as trading conditions revive, the company is in a position to take immediate advantage of the opportunity. Unfortunately, it is impossible yet to forecast when this opportunity may arise. The depth of the depression is without precedent, and its duration already exceeds past experience. The indication is that recovery will be a long and painful process. The great accumulation of stocks to which I have referred, and political and economic conditions in such countries as Australia, India, Germany, Spain, South America, Italy, and the East, are serious adverse factors.

FISCAL PROBLEMS.

In our own country there is also an element of uncertainty due to political conditions. The demand for a change in our fiscal system has been growing insistent during the past few months, although it seems that the present Government has decided to ignore it. I referred last year to the vital importance to this company and to the automobile and allied industries as a whole of retaining the McKenna Duties. I am glad to say that these duties are still in operation, but other industries have lost the modest Protection which they enjoyed, and the McKenna Duties are threatened.

I will not go into this controversial question to-day, except to call attention to one all-important argument which I do not think politicians or even economists have ever appreciated at its real value. I mean the very great change which the development of mass production has introduced. Mass production, depending as it does on heavy capital expenditure on machinery and equipment, and a heavy annual expenditure on research, supervision, and control, involves a great increase in those factors of cost which do not vary, or vary very little, with the rise and fall of output, and a substantial decrease in the relative importance of the cost which does so vary.

This expenditure, which makes for economy, cannot be undertaken unless there is a reasonably secure market of sufficient volume to ensure the necessary minimum demand, which is required to cover the non-varying cost. There is no way of securing such a market except under a fiscal system which will reserve the necessary proportion of the home market to home manufacturers. Unless this is done, our industries not only cannot themselves obtain the full benefit of mass production economy, but they become exposed to the full force of attack from mass production industries in competing countries. These industries, having a secure home market, are able to sell their surplus production here well below full production cost—in fact, at any price which will secure them even a small return towards their overhead expenses.

I am afraid the world picture which I have drawn is a somewhat gloomy one for reasons and causes entirely outside the control of your board, and you will, I am sure, endorse the decision of the board to adopt the most conservative policy, husbanding the company's resources wherever practicable and effecting all possible economies, a policy which we have steadily pursued during the past year. In view of the uncertainties of the future outlook, and to the fact that the trade depression has so far shown no sign of lifting, we feel it incumbent upon us to recommend to the shareholders a policy of patience, until the world conditions improve. We can at least derive encouragement from the intrinsic strength of the company's position, which the events of the closing months of last year have in no way impaired.

On behalf of your board, I can repeat with all conviction the closing words of the speech which I made to you in this room last year :—

"We view the future with confidence, and in the knowledge of our conserved strength. What we require is the renewal of trade so long overdue. We are fully equipped to cope with it. So far as we are concerned, we shall go on in faith and courage, developing the great organization which you have entrusted to our hands."

The report was adopted.